OLIN LIBRARY OPEN CARRELS

A report on carrel use and assignees

May 2014

Assessment & Communication Report
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Executive Summary

Background
In 2013, the Assessment & Communication Unit was asked to assess the use and perceptions of the 296 open carrels at Olin Library, which are distributed on the 3rd-7th floors. In part, this assessment was requested because it seemed that item checkouts (that is, books, journals, and other physical materials) to carrels had dropped recently. This suspicion of a drop in item checkouts lead to other questions, such as how and how often carrels are being used and what might make them better. To answer these questions, we conducted study on the number of open carrels on each floor that were occupied and, in general, how many had items checked out to them.

In addition to the study, we conducted a survey to collect information on use and perceptions of open carrels at Olin Library. The survey was open for 17 days, from March 26th to April 11th, 2014. Of the 198 carrel assignees invited to the survey, 72 participated.

Key Findings
An average of 74% of open carrels were assigned over the summer and fall 2013 semesters, and an average of 51% of those that were assigned had items checked out. The most common frequency and duration of open carrel use is a few times a week, either for one or two hours, or for three to six hours at a time. 53% of survey respondents said that their carrel was their primary study/research space on campus. Other primary study spaces identified were the Graduate Study Room in Olin Library and Graduate Offices.

The most common activity at open carrels is to read/use borrowed materials. 56% of respondents had checked items out during the spring 2014 semester. Of those who didn’t, the most common reason why was because they don’t use physical items at their carrel or they don’t need/use physical items in general.

In general, carrel assignees like the quiet, dependable space that carrels afford, a place to keep materials (like books), and the nice light/view. On the other hand, they report that use by others causes problems, many find the chairs and/or furniture uncomfortable, and they voice limitations or difficulties with the book checkout and/or storage.
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Introduction
In 2013, the Assessment & Communication Unit was asked to assess use and perceptions of the open carrels at Olin Library. In this case, open carrels are defined as the wooden carrels that are assigned to graduate students, and are located on the 3rd-7th floors of Olin (Figure 1). The carrels referred to in this document exclude the locked carrels (which have metal doors) and the classics carrels (in the classics room on the 6th floor). In all, 296 carrels were considered in this study.

Specifically, the questions that we set out to address included:

1. How often do students use their carrels?
2. What would make the carrels better?
3. What is the comparison of the number of students in each department vs. the number of students who have carrels assigned?
4. Why are there so many carrels assigned but relatively few materials checked out to them?

This report shares findings from 1) information on carrel assignees during the summer and fall 2013 semesters, and 2) findings from a survey of carrel assignees conducted during the spring 2014 semester.

Background Information
In order to understand the general use of open carrels at Olin Library, information was gathered on open carrel use during both the summer and fall semesters in 2013. Due to the nature of the system that is used to assign carrels to individuals, we are only able to obtain a snapshot of the current carrel assignees rather than draw a historical look on carrel assignments and use. Therefore, in order to get a better idea of the carrel use, we took snapshots of carrel assignees over two different times: summer 2013 and fall 2013. By taking a snapshot during each of these times, we aimed to capture the variation between a summer semester (when assignments are assumed to be at their lowest) and a fall semester (when assignments are assumed to be at their highest). Below is a summary of the findings.

Open Carrel Assignments
Surprisingly, carrel assignments dropped between the summer and fall 2013 semesters (from 229 to 209 assignments, respectively) (Table 1). However, it is important to note that this also coincided with the opening of the Graduate Study Room on the 5th floor at Olin Library. This drop in carrel assignments could be a reflection of students shifting use from carrels to the Graduate Study Room.
Table 1: Olin Library open carrels assigned by floor. In general, open carrel assignments dropped from summer to fall 2013.

As Table 1 shows, open carrels on the 7th floor are highly utilized, and the majority of carrels on the 3rd floor and 5th floors are also assigned. The 4th floor holds 70 carrels, but carrel assignments on this floor are lowest – open carrel assignments for this floor were 63% (n=44) and 29% (n=27) of available open carrels over the summer to fall 2013 semesters, respectively.

Figure 2 shows some information given in Table 1 in a graphical view. Between the summer and fall 2013 semesters, an average of 74% of open carrels were assigned.

![Percent Open Carrels Assigned by Floor](image)

Figure 2: Percent open carrels assigned by floor in both summer 2013 and fall 2013. The red line notes the average number of open carrels assigned over the two semesters (74%).
It is worth noting that these figures do not include information about general use by non-assignees. Although carrels are assigned to individuals, this alone gives no indication about how much assignees use their carrels, nor does it indicate overall use by non-assignees. Therefore, the number of carrels assigned only helps us to understand how many open carrels are assigned, but not how much they are used. This information was addressed in the survey (pp. 10-44).

**Open Carrel Assignees**

Students hailing from a variety of areas of study had open carrels assigned in the summer and fall of 2013. In all, the department of English Language and Literature had the highest representation of students with open carrels assigned at Olin (29 individuals in summer 2013; 25 individuals in fall 2013).

During summer 2013, open carrel assignees belonged to 43 different departments (of 229 assigned open carrels), and to 42 different departments (of 209 assigned open carrels) during fall 2013. Table 2 shows the departments with the most open carrel assignees over the summer and fall of 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Summer 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language &amp; Lit</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance Studies</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Studies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Departments with 10 or more carrel assignees in summer or fall 2013.

Of course, each department at Cornell hosts a varying number of graduate students, so it is useful to note the number of graduate students who have open carrels from each department to the total number of graduate students in each corresponding department (Table 3). The Medieval Studies department has the highest proportion of students who are carrel assignees in both summer and fall 2013 (67% and 50% respectively). Other departments with a high proportion of assignees include: German Studies; History of Art, Architecture and Visual Studies; English Language and Literature; Classics; and Romance Studies.
Check Outs to Open Carrels

Open carrel assignees can check materials from Olin, Kroch, Uris and the Library Annex to their carrel. In general, there have been a declining number of materials (that is, the number of books, journals or other physical volumes) checked out to carrels per year. As Figure 3 shows, materials checked out to carrels has declined drastically since the year 2000.

Fig 3: Number of items checked out to all carrels (including locked and classics carrels) at Olin Library, by year, from 2000 to 2013.
Table 4 shows the percentage of assigned carrels that had materials checked out over the summer and fall of 2013. In general, about 50% of assigned carrels had materials checked out over these two semesters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>Total carrels</th>
<th>Summer 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assigned carrels</td>
<td>Carrels with materials checked out</td>
<td>% assigned carrels with check outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4:* Number and percentage of open carrels with materials checked out, by floor.

Figure 4 shows some information given in Table 4 in a graphical view. Between the summer and fall 2013 semesters, and average of 51% of assigned carrels had books checked out.

*Figure 4:* Proportion of open carrels with items checked out, summer and fall 2013. The red line notes the average number of assigned open carrels with items checked out.
Survey of Carrel Assignees – Spring 2014

In order to answer many of the questions that we set out to answer, we conducted a survey of open carrel assignees at Olin Library in the spring 2014 semester. Open carrel assignees were invited to participate in the survey via an email from Bonna Boettcher on Wednesday, March 26, 2014. One reminder was sent out (also by Bonna) on Monday, April 7, 2014 (See Appendix A for the messages used for the initial invitation and reminder). The survey closed on Friday, April 11, 2014. The 17 days that the survey was open included Spring Break (March 29 – April 6, 2014).

In all, 198 individuals were invited to take the survey and 72 individuals participated in the survey (a 36% response rate).

Survey Respondent Demographics

71% (n=51) of survey respondents were PhD students, 10% (n=7) were Master’s students, 11% (n=8) were not graduate students (three visiting scholars, two faculty members, and one undergraduate), and 8% (n=6) were unknown (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Status of survey respondents. 71% were PhD students, 10% were Master’s students, 8% had an unknown status, and 11% were other (3 visiting scholars, 2 faculty members and 1 undergraduate student).
Overall, the survey response rate was highest from open carrel assignees on the 7\textsuperscript{th} floor (35\% of all survey respondents), and lowest for the 4\textsuperscript{th} floor (8\% of all survey respondents) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**: Proportion of survey respondents by floor.

Survey respondents were asked to self-identify their field of study. Of the 61 respondents who answered this question, the largest concentrations were in English (11\%, n=7), History (11\%, n=7), Romance Studies (10\%, n=6), and Classics (8\%, n=5) (Figure 7). Although it is difficult to tell exactly what department each survey respondent belongs to (since answers were free-text), it is estimated that approximately 25 different departments were represented in this survey.
Figure 7: Survey respondents by department.
Responses to Survey Questions

Question 1: How often have you used your carrel this semester?

71 of 72 respondents answered this question.

The most typical respondent uses his/her carrel a few times a week (44%, n=31), and only two respondents indicated that they never used their carrels (3%) (Figure 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A few times a week</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A few times a month</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A few times this semester</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8: Frequency of carrel use by respondents over the spring 2014 semester. The majority of respondents indicate that they use their carrel a few times a week (44%, n=31).*
Question 2: During this semester, on the days when you do use your carrel, how much time do you typically spend using it per day?

66 of 72 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents indicated that they use their carrels either for one or two hours (41%, n=27) or three to six hours (47%, n=31) (Figure 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than an hour</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>One or two hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Three to six hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seven hours or more</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Typical duration of carrel use by respondents over the spring 2014 semester. On the days when they do use their carrels, most respondents use their carrel for either one or two hours (41%, n=27) or three to six hours (47%, n=31).
**Questions 1 & 2: Frequency and Duration of Open Carrel Use**

The most common response to Questions 1 and 2 were that respondents used their open carrels a few times a week, either for one or two hours (n=13) or for three to six hours (n=14). In all, 41% (n=27) of respondents fell in these categories (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of use</th>
<th>Less than an hour</th>
<th>One or two hours</th>
<th>Three to six hours</th>
<th>Seven hours or more</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a month</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times this semester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5*: Frequency and duration of open carrel use. The most typical respondent uses their carrel a few times a week, either for one or two hours or three to six hours (highlighted by yellow).
Question 3: During this semester, which activities have you used your carrel for? 

66 of 72 respondents answered this question.

The most popular activity at open carrels is to read/use borrowed materials (as indicated by over 80% of respondents, n=59). Other common activities are to write (74%, n=53), read online (56%, n=40), keep checked out items (54%, n=39), and email (51%, n=37) (Figure 10).

Respondents were also given the opportunity to enter free text if they selected “other” (6%, n=4). All four respondents who selected “other” entered free text:

- I would like to be able to leave my personal belongings there. Little lockers to hold a laptop would be nice.
- Homework for language classes
- Work for classes/research/TAing. It's really nice to have in the evenings and when it's busy at the end of the semester.
- Grade papers

![Open Carrel Assignee Activities](image)

**Figure 10:** Open carrel assignee activities by percent of respondents. Most respondents indicated that they read/use borrowed materials (82%) and write (74%).
Question 4: During this semester, which activity have you primarily used your carrel for?

66 of 72 respondents answered this question.

In order to understand the primary carrel use for survey respondents, the survey also asked what activity respondents primarily did when they used their open carrels. That is, of all of the options that they chose in Question 3, which one activity occupied their time most? As Figure 11 shows, the majority of respondents indicated that they primarily read/use borrowed materials (39%, n=26). Other respondents indicated that they keep checked out items (24%, n=16) or write (21%, n=14). And a minority of respondents indicated that they read online, read/use my own materials, email and listen/watch media (6%, 5%, 3% and 2%, respectively).

![Primary Open Carrel Assignee Activities]

**Figure 11:** Activities that survey respondents primarily do at carrel. 39% of respondents report that they primarily read/use borrowed materials at their carrels.
Question 5: Have you checked out books, journals or other physical volumes to your carrel this semester?

68 of 72 respondents answered this question.

Of the 68 individuals who responded to this question, 56% (n=38) reported that they had checked materials out to their carrel this semester and 38% (n=26) that they hadn’t. Six percent (n=4) were unsure or couldn’t remember (Figure 12).

**Figure 12**: Proportion of open carrel assignees who checked materials out to their carrels over the spring 2014 semester. 56% (n=38) had, 38% (n=26) hadn’t, and 6% (n=4) either couldn’t remember or were unsure.
Question 6: Why haven’t you checked out any books, journals or other physical volumes to your carrel this semester?

The 26 individuals who answered that they had not checked materials out to their carrel during the spring 2014 semester were asked this follow-up question. All 26 respondents answered this question.

Of these, 38% (n=10) answered I use them, but not at my carrel, and 31% (n=8) responded don’t need or use them. Two individuals answered only use online/electronic information, one didn’t know I could, and one don’t know how to (Figure 13).

Nine survey respondents gave other reasons why they didn’t check materials out over the spring 2014 semester, as follows:

- As an open carrel, it doesn’t seem like a secure space to store materials.
- Have had all I need for current project; plan to do more in second half of semester
- I am afraid others might take them
- I checked out many materials to my carrel last semester.
- I consult books already checked out to my carrel.
- I find that there is often someone else in the carrel and have decided to keep books at another location
- I have what I need already
- I need a carrel in Kroch, because I can’t work on such a small space as the open carrels in Olin, so I don’t use it.
- I try to keep them in one place, so usually my office in my building.
Figure 13: General reasons why open carrel assignees report that they have not checked materials out to their carrel during the spring 2014 semester. The most common responses were that they don’t use them at my carrel (n=10) and that they don’t need or use them in general (n=8).
Question 7: What single feature do you like best or value most about your carrel?

60 of 72 respondents answered this question.

This question allowed for free-text answers. Figure 14 shows the frequency of responses by general category. Noted most frequently were that the open carrels provide a quiet space, a designated space, and that they provide a place to store books.

![Figure 14: General categories for favorite features of open carrels at Olin Library. Those most mentioned were that they provide a quiet space, a dependable space and a place to store books.](image)

The full text for responses given are grouped into themes, below. Many answers included multiple themes, so to avoid the risk of losing context or over interpreting answers by parsing them apart, responses with multiple themes are duplicated.

**Quiet Space**
- A quiet space designated only for me.
- quietness, having my one cubicle-like space, the view onto the ag quad
- bright, nice view, quiet
- nice light and quiet, it is not a dependable space for the reason noted below.
• QUIET and SOLITUDE. It is more or less free of any stimuli (besides the window), and so I am able to focus very well on writing which I get distracted from at home or in study locations where there are people around.
• dependable, quiet
• dependable space, nice light, quiet.
• I like almost everything about it - I got a great location, quiet, and a curtain that works (my previous carrel had a broken one).
• quiet, and I love the view (7th floor Olin, quad side).
• A space to check books to so I don't have to lug them home, as well as a quite place to work w/o distractions.
• Quiet, dependable space.
• It's dependable space that is (usually) quiet and I can access when things are very busy on campus. It's my "get s%*t done" space--where I go when I really need to focus and work. Unlike any other space, it has everything I need for intense work: quiet, designated space, food/coffee, and a place to leave my stuff safely to get up and walk around for breaks.
• Quiet and secluded space.
• quiet isolation
• I love this carrel--it is one of the reasons I came to Cornell (I am a faculty member who was brought here from another institution). I love the view over the mountains. I love the peace and quiet. I can write and work here like nowhere else.
• quiet and isolate space.
• Quiet
• It is a quite and dependable place.
• I check out most of my books to my carrel because I like getting work done in the library. I like that I have a space on campus where I can keep my research materials. Even though I often have to ask undergraduates to leave my carrel, which is annoying, I can count on my carrel as a quiet place to get research done.
• It is quiet. There are few distractions, so I'm able to work productively.
• Quiet, my own space, able to leave books at my carrel without dragging all of them home.
• Quiet and dependable.
• quiet, dependable space

Dependable Space
• In theory, it is a dependable space, though this often doesn't work out in practice.
• Dependable space!
• Established workspace on campus where I can leave my work in order to start where I left off.
• That it's a quiet, dependable space where I can get my work done.
• it's mine (which, with study space at a premium on campus, is actually saying something)
• Dependable space.
• dependable, quiet
• dependable space, nice light, quiet.
• Quiet, dependable space.
• It's nice to not have to lug all the books I use occasionally for my research back and forth between home and campus. When it isn't midterm or finals season, it is usually nice and quiet to work there.
• It's dependable space that is (usually) quiet and I can access when things are very busy on campus. It's my "get s%*t done" space--where I go when I really need to focus and work. Unlike any other space, it has everything I need for intense work: quiet, designated space, food/coffee, and a place to leave my stuff safely to get up and walk around for breaks.
• dependable space
• dependent space
• dependable space. strategic because it's on the same floor as the graduate reading room so I can alternate between the two
• Dependable space
• Dependable place to be productive.
• It is a quite and dependable place.
• dependable study space--awesome to have books checked out but not have to drag them all home!
• I check out most of my books to my carrel because I like getting work done in the library. I like that I have a space on campus where I can keep my research materials. Even though I often have to ask undergraduates to leave my carrel, which is annoying, I can count on my carrel as a quiet place to get research done.
• Quiet, my own space, able to leave books at my carrel without dragging all of them home.
• Dependable, access to library, relatively distraction-free.
• Quiet and dependable.
• quiet, dependable space

Place to keep books
• A space to check books to so I don’t have to lug them home, as well as a quite place to work w/o distractions.
• I like having a place to keep my checked out books.
• Place to store checked out books.
• I do enjoy having a place where I can store and access easily those books which are most useful to me.
• Being able to check out books to my carrel (so that I don't have to carry them home and use it at the library without having to go back to the stacks every time I need to use the books).
• It's nice to not have to lug all the books I use occasionally for my research back and forth between home and campus. When it isn't midterm or finals season, it is usually nice and quiet to work there.
• I like that I am able to sign book out to my carrel, which means that I don't have to haul them around campus.
• A place to keep books so I don't have to lug them to campus every day
• ability to leave books
• book storage space
• I love that the books that are checked out on my carrel have no expiration dates.
• dependable study space--awesome to have books checked out but not have to drag them all home!
• I check out most of my books to my carrel because I like getting work done in the library. I like that I have a space on campus where I can keep my research materials. Even though I often have to ask undergraduates to leave my carrel, which is annoying, I can count on my carrel as a quiet place to get research done.
• Quiet, my own space, able to leave books at my carrel without dragging all of them home.

Convenience
• light, convenient floor
• I like the central location for studying on campus and the privacy to do so.
• All the above plus the outlet for my laptop. A plus now that the stacks have been rearranged is that the books I need most are on the same level as my carrel!

Nice Light/View
• light, convenient floor
• bright, nice view, quiet
• quietness, having my one cubicle-like space, the view onto the ag quad
• nice light and quiet, it is not a dependable space for the reason noted below.
• dependable space, nice light, quiet
• quiet, and I love the view (7th floor Olin, quad side).
• I love this carrel--it is one of the reasons I came to Cornell (I am a faculty member who was brought here from another institution). I love the view over the mountains. I love the peace and quiet. I can write and work here like nowhere else.
• Love that it's by the big window on 7th floor
• It's on the 7th floor by a large window, love the view and the light.
• The wonderful view from the window
Nothing good to say

- I dislike it.
- There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.
Question 8: If you could change one thing about your carrel, what would it be?

57 of 72 respondents answered this question.

This question allowed for free-text answers. Figure 15 shows the frequency of responses by general category. Noted most were issues revolving around use by non-assignees, uncomfortable furniture (particularly chairs), and insecurity of space.

Figure 15: General categories for complaints of open carrels at Olin Library. Those most mentioned were issues revolving non-assignees, uncomfortable furniture, and insecure storage.

The responses given are grouped into themes, below. Many answers included multiple themes, so to avoid the risk of losing context or over interpreting answers by parsing them apart, responses with multiple themes are duplicated.
Use by Others

- Stupid undergrads always sitting there. They leave their stuff all over my carrel and then disappear. Also, they leave trash, write all over my carrel. Ugh.
- As an open carrel, it doesn't seem like a secure space to store my belongings (computer, etc.) should I need to gather more materials, go to the washroom, etc. Other students are also often using my carrel.
- That it should be restricted to graduate student use only. I have had the uncomfortable experience of needing to wake up undergrads while they nap at my carrel at least three times.
- I would really appreciate it if undergraduates did not use my desk. I don't like having to tell them to leave each time I come to my desk. I realize it's difficult to prevent them from using an open desk, but I think Olin should figure a way to prevent this from happening.
- I wish I could keep undergraduates from eating food at my carrel and getting food crumbs and coffee spills all over it.
- Having a clear policy on what to do when someone is sitting at your carrel would be nice...It is sometimes awkward to have to ask someone sitting there to move, and even when you ask them nicely and explain about the carrel assignment, they refuse to move.
- I ought to be made even clearer that students borrowing the carrel are not to leave their own things there or displace mine. In addition, library books put in my carrel appear to be charged on a very irregular basis, which means that they will appear as available in your catalogue whereas they are in my carrel
- 1. One of the most frustrating things is that my carrel is always being used by someone else. I know that it is possible to ask people to vacate, but I feel bad about doing that. And, so, there are so many times when I can't even use the carrel. It would be nice if there was a way to ensure that the carrel is available for the carrel-holder when they want.  
2. My carrel chair is so uncomfortable that it is not possible to sit in it for more than a few hours. I wish we could have the kinds of chairs that are in Olin cafe.  
3. I wish it were possible to leave behind some personal items in a safe way (for instance, in a locked drawer).  
- So many undergrads using these spaces. Never want to ask someone to leave the desk. Also, the new grad student room is a lot more comfortable.
- add more indications for the people not assigned to my carrel but who nevertheless use it that they ought not to move the books that I want to check out and have left on my desk -- this has happened a couple of times and then it has taken 3 weeks for a book to get charged, even if I move it back to the desk every day
- I wish undergraduates who use my carrel would not move my books that I'm waiting to get checked out to my carrel. I fill out and insert the pink slips in these books and leave them out on the desk in order to get them checked out to my carrel by the carrel attendant. However, more often than not, people who use my carrel move these books to the shelves or even out of my carrel completely, so the books I need don't get checked out. It's honestly a source of stress for me. This is probably not feasible because of the expense, but I would like little baskets installed
on the sides of all the carrels. Carrel holders can place the books they want checked out to their carrels in the baskets, and the surface of the desks would be clear, so there would be no reason for undergraduates to move things around.

- Sometimes the process of evicting students daily from my carrel (particularly near the end of the semester) can be frustrating. I'm not sure there's much that can be done about this, however.
- Students have been checking out books to my carrel this year, and leaving trash and food at my desk. I wish there was some way to police what books get checked out. I came back to my carrel and there were 10 books that I hadn't checked out on the shelves.
- I wish undergrads couldn't use it. Every time I come back, someone has messed up the blinds and left food on my desk. It's very frustrating. Once, I even came back to find the back of my chair had been snapped in two.
- right to use my designated carrel when someone is using it

Uncomfortable Chairs

- The wooden chairs are too low for the desk, and uncomfortably for sitting for a long period. Also it is unsettling having to deal with undergraduates who sit at my carrel and who act rude and unmannerly when asked to move. Most undergrads do not seem to understand that the carrels are assigned to graduate students.
- chair,
- More comfortable chair. Its difficult to stay seated there for too long. Also, graduate student carrell holders should be able to ask undergraduates to leave who are using their carrel.
- So packed with carrels so noisy back to back. I could not concentrate. Also, the squeaky sound when moing chairs is annoying
- Lighting: I need white light at night  More comfortable chairs
- There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.
- A more comfortable chair--although I understand that it's a tough change to make.
- the furniture -- the wooden seats are uncomfortable and there are carvings and markings left by other students on the walls of my carrel.
- 1. One of the most frustrating things is that my carrel is always being used by someone else. I know that it is possible to ask people to vacate, but I feel bad about doing that. And, so, there are so many times when I can't even use the carrel. It would be nice if there was a way to ensure that the carrel is available for the carrel-holder when they want.  2. My carrel chair is so uncomfortable that it is not possible to sit in it for more than a few hours. I wish we could have the kinds of chairs that are in Olin cafe.  3. I wish it were possible to leave behind some personal items in a safe way (for instance, in a locked drawer).
- more comfortable chair
• A better chair. I bring a back support to the library (I keep it in my carrel) and wouldn't mind a softer seat. (But then, I'm 58.)
• the chair. need more comfortable chair
• A more comfortable chair
• Make the seat more ergonomic.
• I would want a more comfortable, ergonomic chair. I would use it a lot more if the chair wasn't so uncomfortable.

Desk/Furniture

• Furniture
• more shelves.
• space: there is not even room for an open laptop and a few books on the table, it's so narrow!
• There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.
• the furniture -- the wooden seats are uncomfortable and there are carvings and markings left by other students on the walls of my carrel.

Noise

• So packed with carrels so noisy back to back. I could not concentrate. Also, the squeaky sound when moving chairs is annoying
• There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.
• noise from other carrels/people in the stacks
• The noise. People talk a lot int he stacks.
• Noisy undergrads.

Location

• Close so that I could keep personal books there.
• Better light/Ventilaion/Window
• It would be nice to be close to the books I use again. They used to literally be in the stacks right next to my carrel, but the reorganization of the library kind of messed that up.
• Location
• I would make it a locked carrel
• The underground location and the artificial light are not ideal.
• A little too isolated (not sure how to solve that, but the shelves do provide a certain intimacy,
Insecure Storage

- As an open carrel, it doesn't seem like a secure space to store my belongings (computer, etc.) should I need to gather more materials, go to the washroom, etc. Other students are also often using my carrel.
- I would be able to store other personal belongings securely there, especially Borrow Direct books.
- I would keep a locked section so I could leave my stuff and go to the cafe or bathroom without worrying about it.
- Two things: a small place to secure/lock up personal belongings, and a nap space? (Actually, that would be fine anywhere in the library.) Sometimes I just need to lay down to take a power nap to keep focusing, especially in 8-10 hour sessions at the library. It would be kind of amazing if there were mats or nap pods somewhere. Maybe these, or a cheaper option, would be a nice addition to Olin library? [http://www.metronaps.com/](http://www.metronaps.com/)
- adding a small lock box for a computer or something if you need to use the restroom, meet with classmates, or go to the café.
- My locker would be attached to or close to it.
- 1. One of the most frustrating things is that my carrel is always being used by someone else. I know that it is possible to ask people to vacate, but I feel bad about doing that. And, so, there are so many times when I can't even use the carrel. It would be nice if there was a way to ensure that the carrel is available for the carrel-holder when they want.  2. My carrel chair is so uncomfortable that it is not possible to sit in it for more than a few hours. I wish we could have the kinds of chairs that are in Olin cafe.  3. I wish it were possible to leave behind some personal items in a safe way (for instance, in a locked drawer).
- Having one of those private locked carrels would be awesome. I would also really like it if i could leave borrow direct books in my carrel.
- This could be asking too much but it would be nice to have a locker inside each carrel so one can also put borrow-direct books near one’s desk. It’s really inconvenient to move those borrow-direct books back and forth every day when you are writing thesis or term papers.

Item Checkout and Storage Issues

- If I could change one thing I would love to be able to keep books at my carrel that are checked out from other Cornell libraries. I have several books from the ILR library that I am not allowed to keep in my Olin carrel. The carrel would be so much more useful if I could keep books checked out from any Cornell library in my carrel.
- I would be able to store other personal belongings securely there, especially Borrow Direct books.
- I ought to be made even clearer that students borrowing the carrel are not to leave their own things there or displace mine. In addition, library books put in my carrel appear to be charged on
a very irregular basis, which means that they will appear as available in your catalogue whereas they are in my carrel

• Having one of those private locked carrels would be awesome. I would also really like it if i could leave borrow direct books in my carrel.

• It would be nice if I could leave any Cornell library or Borrow Direct book there. I have a carrel because I have an injured ankle and therefore can't carry heavy books around, so it's frustrating that I can only leave Olin books at my carrel.

• This could be asking too much but it would be nice to have a locker inside each carrel so one can also put borrow-direct books near one's desk. It's really inconvenient to move those borrow-direct books back and forth every day when you are writing thesis or term papers.

• add more indications for the people not assigned to my carrel but who nevertheless use it that they ought not to move the books that I want to check out and have left on my desk -- this has happened a couple of times and then it has taken 3 weeks for a book to get charged, even if I move it back to the desk every day

• I wish undergraduates who use my carrel would not move my books that I'm waiting to get checked out to my carrel. I fill out and insert the pink slips in these books and leave them out on the desk in order to get them checked out to my carrel by the carrel attendant. However, more often than not, people who use my carrel move these books to the shelves or even out of my carrel completely, so the books I need don't get checked out. It's honestly a source of stress for me. This is probably not feasible because of the expense, but I would like little baskets installed on the sides of all the carrels. Carrel holders can place the books they want checked out to their carrels in the baskets, and the surface of the desks would be clear, so there would be no reason for undergraduates to move things around.

• Students have been checking out books to my carrel this year, and leaving trash and food at my desk. I wish there was some way to police what books get checked out. I came back to my carrel and there were 10 books that I hadn't checked out on the shelves.

Lighting

• Lighting: I need white light at night  More comfortable chairs
• Better light/Ventilaion/Window
• There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.

• I am on the 7th floor, and I love the big window - however, I REALLY wish there was a way to close the blinds when needed, because the carrel gets direct sunlight during the day, which can make it hot and uncomfortably bright (makes computer screens hard to see, reflects off of my glasses, etc).

• The underground location and the artificial light are not ideal.
Food

• I wish I could keep undergraduates from eating food at my carrel and getting food crumbs and coffee spills all over it.
• I wish we could have "clean" food and be able to eat there.
• I wish undergrads couldn't use it. Every time I come back, someone has messed up the blinds and left food on my desk. It's very frustrating. Once, I even came back to find the back of my chair had been snapped in two.
• Students have been checking out books to my carrel this year, and leaving trash and food at my desk. I wish there was some way to police what books get checked out. I came back to my carrel and there were 10 books that I hadn't checked out on the shelves.

Other

• Two things: a small place to secure/lock up personal belongings, and a nap space? (Actually, that would be fine anywhere in the library.) Sometimes I just need to lay down to take a power nap to keep focusing, especially in 8-10 hour sessions at the library. It would be kind of amazing if there were mats or nap pods somewhere. Maybe these, or a cheaper option, would be a nice addition to Olin library? http://www.metronaps.com/
• Mine is missing a trash can.
• heating (too cold during the winter)
• Nothing
• Outlet nearby would allow me to do more work from my carrel.
Question 9: Is your carrel your primary study/research space on campus?

66 of 72 respondents answered this question.

53% (n=35) responded that their open carrel is their primary study/research space on campus, and 47% (n=31) that it isn’t (Figure 16).

**Figure 16**: 53% (n=35) report that their open carrel is their primary research/study space. 47% report that it isn’t.
Question 10: Where is your primary study/research space on campus?

The 31 individuals who answered no to Question 9 were asked this follow-up question. Of the 31 respondents asked, 25 answered.

Of those who responded, 40% (n=10) indicated that the Graduate Study Room (on the 5th floor of Olin) is their primary study/research space, and 28% (n=7) that their graduate office is. Other locations of note were:

- Green Dragon
- Uris Library
- AD White Library
- My room
- Classics Graduate Rooms on Level 6
- BRB in the morning
- Home
- Gov. Grad computer lab
- I need to often change study place, some are my primary space for a while. I work in my ta office, in cafes, the Big Red Barn, etc.
Question 14: Do you have any additional thoughts to share about your carrel?
[Note that Questions 11-13 collected demographic information which is included on pp. 10 - 12 of this report]

31 of the 72 respondents to the survey answered this free-text question.

The responses given are grouped into themes, below. Many answers included multiple themes, so to avoid the risk of losing context or over interpreting answers by parsing them apart, responses with multiple themes are duplicated.

Major themes included:

- Address ownership and use by others
- Book charges and storage
- Secure storage
- Comfort
- Noise
- Food
- Praise
- Other

**Address Ownership & Use by Others**

- Yes. Somehow we should find a way to keep the undergrads from using our carrels. I hate how every time I go up to use my carrel there is someone there and I have to kick him/her out and they make a big scene over it. Also, they frequently move my books that are waiting to be checked out to my carrel and then I get notes of reprimand that I shouldn't put books on my shelves before they're checked out. Sorry, just needed to rant about it.
- My carrel would be my primary study space if it was more comfortable to work on and if the space could be reserved for me.
- Some carrels, mine included, are missing waste baskets. Our names should be shown on the carrel, or at least something that proves that the carrel is assigned to someone so that during study week we don't have to fight with undergrads for our own carrels.
- I wish we had ways to put a name tag on them for the carrel holder, so that undergrads wouldn't give us guff when we ask them to please leave so we can use it. Sometimes they can be very difficult about it because they have no "proof" that it's really my carrel space or that I have a overriding claim to it, and these confrontations are exhausting when I just want to use the books I have stored there.
It would be nice if a custodian cleaned the carrel. Others that use my carrel before I get there leave food and drinks in my carrel. I have to clean up the carrel before I start working. I always leave my carrel clean so it annoys me when others leave it messy.

My carrel is constantly used by my undergraduate students who drink and eat there. I don't know what to do about this. Someone also checked their books on to my carrel and was using my carrel as their own for a few weeks.

My carrel is in Kroch and the tops of the lockers are very dusty. Otherwise it is a great space, although almost every time I go there I have to ask a student occupying my carrel to leave.

Book Charges / Storage

- Yes. Somehow we should find a way to keep the undergrads from using our carrels. I hate how every time I go up to use my carrel there is someone there and I have to kick him/her out and they make a big scene over it. Also, they frequently move my books that are waiting to be checked out to my carrel and then I get notes of reprimand that I shouldn't put books on my shelves before they're checked out. Sorry, just needed to rant about it.
- It is useful to keep very large books that are a burden to carry home, but it is not comfortable or convenient enough to work at for too long.
- My carrel is constantly used by my undergraduate students who drink and eat there. I don't know what to do about this. Someone also checked their books on to my carrel and was using my carrel as their own for a few weeks.
- It would be great if carrel slips were more readily available, perhaps at the entrance to the stacks on each floor.
- Books disappear, undergrads leave trash, books are moved and stacked, shelves are moved. It just feels like a very vulnerable, cold space with an uncomfortable chair. But I love the window.
- Please educate undergraduates not to move things around on the carrels, especially books that are left out to be charged to the carrels. Thank you.

Secure Storage

- I would like to leave things in my carrel (my personal books, a seat cushion, lamp, papers, etc) but I'm worried they will be taken. Again, this may just be an issue of getting a locked/private carrel. Also the 7th floor has a trillion times better lighting/view than the other floors, and I imagine there is a fight over who gets those carrels.

Comfort

- My carrel would be my primary study space if it was more comfortable to work on and if the space could be reserved for me.
- reduce the number of carrels so that the carrels have more space and less noise.
- It is useful to keep very large books that are a burden to carry home, but it is not comfortable or convenient enough to work at for too long.
• A more comfortable chair would be helpful!
• Books disappear, undergrads leave trash, books are moved and stacked, shelves are moved. It just feels like a very vulnerable, cold space with an uncomfortable chair. But I love the window.

Noise
• reduce the number of carrels so that the carrels have more space and less noise.
• Because it's so quiet normally when someone listens to loud music through headphones it's really disruptive. People should be encouraged to check the noise level of their headphones, especially if they are small and let sound out easily.
• Occasionally other people's conversations can be distracting (mostly during finals week when many more students are studying in the library). Maybe having more designated group study spaces/spaces where quiet talking is allowed and/or signs reminding students of these spaces would help alleviate the problem.

Food
• While I understand the logic behind banning food from the carrels (and I don't really like other people eating at mine), it just isn't realistic to expect people to stand outside in 10 degree weather to eat when there aren't any seats available in the cafe - which is almost all of the time.
• It would be great if we could eat something at the carrels like the policy on being able to eat un-messy(?) food like the 2nd floor at the Mann Library. I understand that there might be concerns about the books being damaged, and it is frustrating when other carrel users leave crumbs or sticky something on the desk when I'm not using it, but if we could bring in maybe like a cereal bar or small pieces of candy to pop in our mouths, during long-period of use, I would use the carrels more often.
• My carrel is constantly used my undergraduate students who drink and eat there. I don't know what to do about this. Someone also checked their books on to my carrel and was using my carrel as their own for a few weeks.

Praise
• Being able to check out books to my carrel and have access to it as an established, on-campus, private work space has been indispensable for my dissertation research.
• Thank you for the carrel. While I don't use it daily, I love it--it is where I get my most productive and best writing done in the whole city of Ithaca.
• I always show it to first year PhD students on tours so that they can apply for a space. I LOVE the resource even if I don't make as much use of it as I should/could.
• My carrel is in Kroch and the tops of the lockers are very dusty. Otherwise it is a great space, although almost every time I go there I have to ask a student occupying my carrel to leave.
• In general I really like my carrel and I really enjoy having a private space on campus.
• Yes. THANK YOU MICHELLE. Making this carrel available to me has saved my work life. I wouldn't know what to do without it. As I said, one of the primary reasons I came to Cornell was this carrel.
• Books disappear, undergrads leave trash, books are moved and stacked, shelves are moved. It just feels like a very vulnerable, cold space with an uncomfortable chair. But I love the window.
• I think it is a really good idea. It may be just a tiny bit too isolated and impersonal, but I wouldn't even know where to start to change that myself...
• Library staff are always helpful and wonderful people!!! Thanks, ladies and gents.
• I love that Cornell allows graduate students to have these!

Other
• If I had a carrel in Kroch, or a locked carrel in Olin, I would honestly go at least four times a week; it just so happens that I was disappointed my my open carrel and barely went, so in the end, I've even forgotten where it is, and I thought I hadn't renewed it...
• Some carrels, mine included, are missing waste baskets. Our names should be shown on the carrel, or at least something that proves that the carrel is assigned to someone so that during study week we don't have to fight with undergrads for our own carrels.
• My carrel is in Kroch and the tops of the lockers are very dusty. Otherwise it is a great space, although almost every time I go there I have to ask a student occupying my carrel to leave.
• setting up more locked carrels for pre-ABD phd students (i.e. students in A-examination status)
• I initially reserved a carrel when I did not have a quiet office environment in which to work. This semester I have been given a quiet office in Goldwin Smith, and the importance of having a carrel is greatly diminished.
• No
• I would like to leave things in my carrel (my personal books, a seat cushion, lamp, papers, etc) but I'm worried they will be taken. Again, this may just be an issue of getting a locked/private carrel. Also the 7th floor has a trillion times better lighting/view than the other floors, and I imagine there is a fight over who gets those carrels.
• I think it is a really good idea. It may be just a tiny bit too isolated and impersonal, but I wouldn't even know where to start to change that myself...
• There is nothing about my carrel that I like. It is in the stacks. The light is bad, the dust makes my allergies crazy, the seat height to table height is awkward making it uncomfortable to study for any length of time and it is near the bathroom so I constantly hear people shuffling in and out. It is a terrible place to study so I never use it.
Appendix A: Invitations to Take the Survey

Initial Invitation
Sent on March 26, 2014:

Dear Olin Carrel Assignee,

Olin Library offers graduate student carrels, and according to our records, a carrel is assigned to you. We are interested in learning about how our study spaces at Olin are used, and we are particularly interested in your perspective as a carrel assignee. Your feedback will help us to identify and plan future changes that we can make to better serve you.

We invite you to share your thoughts on how you use your carrel. Please take a few short minutes to fill out this survey (link below). If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Erin Eldermire at erb29@cornell.edu or 607-255-9252.

Here are some details:
• Your participation is confidential and voluntary.
• Responses will not be linked to your name or email address.
• By answering the survey, you are consenting to participate in this study.
• The survey will close on Friday, April 11, 2014 at 5:00 pm.

Survey link: https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_clyyH3HK5qc2YiV

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey - your feedback is very important to us!

Warm regards,
Bonna

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Bonna J. Boettcher
Interim Director, Olin and Uris Libraries
Cornell University

e-mail: bjb57@cornell.edu
Reminder

Sent on April 7, 2014:

Dear Olin Carrel Assignee,

On March 26th, I invited you to participate in a survey about Olin Library graduate student carrels. I have included my original message, below, for your reference.

To those of you who have taken the time to fill out our survey, thank you. Your responses will help us to understand how our carrels are used, and will help us to identify changes that we may be able to make in the future to better serve you.

For those of you who haven’t taken the survey already, there is still time to add your voice. Your input is valuable to us as we make future plans. If you have a few minutes, please fill out the survey. The survey will close on April 11th at 5pm. This email is the only reminder that we will send for this survey.

Survey link: https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_clyyH3HK5qc2YiV
Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Dear Graduate Student, Olin Library offers graduate student carrels, and according to our records, a carrel is assigned to you! We are interested in learning about how our study spaces at Olin are used, and we are particularly interested in your perspective as a carrel assignee. Your feedback will help us to identify and plan future changes that we can make to better serve you. This survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Your participation is confidential and voluntary. Responses will not be linked to your name or email address. By answering the survey, you are consenting to participate in this study. The survey will close after 5pm on Friday, April 11, 2014. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Erin Eldermire at erb29@cornell.edu or 607-255-9252. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey - your feedback is important to us!

Q1 How often have you used your carrel this semester?
- Daily (1)
- A few times a week (2)
- A few times a month (3)
- A few times this semester (4)
- Rarely (5)
- Never (6)
If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To Q5

Q2 During this semester, on the days when you do use your carrel, how much time do you typically spend using it per day?
- Less than an hour (1)
- One or two hours (2)
- Three to six hours (3)
- Seven hours or more (4)
Q3 During this semester, which activities have you used your carrel for? (choose all that apply)

- Read or use physical books or volumes that I borrow/access from the library (1)
- Read or use physical books or volumes that I own (2)
- Read online (e.g. ebooks, blogs, articles) (3)
- Write (4)
- Listen to audio files and/or watch videos (5)
- Email (6)
- Use social media (7)
- Rest / Nap (8)
- Leave my personal belongings while I go somewhere else (9)
- Use it as a space to keep books and/or journals that are checked out to me and/or my carrel (10)
- Other: (11) ____________________

Q4 During this semester, which activity have you primarily used your carrel for? (choose only one)

- Read or use physical books or volumes that I borrow/access from the library (1)
- Read or use physical books or volumes that I own (2)
- Read online (e.g. ebooks, blogs, articles) (3)
- Write (4)
- Listen to audio files and/or watch videos (5)
- Email (6)
- Use social media (7)
- Rest / Nap (8)
- Leave my personal belongings while I go somewhere else (9)
- Use it as a space to keep checked out books and/or journals (10)
- Other: (11) ____________________

Q5 Have you checked out books, journals or other physical volumes to your carrel this semester?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Can't remember / Not sure (3)

If Yes or I don't know are Selected, Then Skip To Q7
Q6 Why haven't you checked out any books, journals or other physical volumes to your carrel this semester? (check all that apply)

- Don't need or use them (1)
- Didn't know I could (2)
- Don't know how to (3)
- I use them, but not at my carrel (4)
- Only use online / electronic information (5)
- Other: (6) __________________________

Q7 What single feature do you like best or value most about your carrel? (e.g. nice light, quiet, dependable space, etc).

Q8 If you could change one thing about your carrel, what would it be?

Q9 Is your carrel your primary study / research space on campus?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Q11

Q10 Where is your primary study / research space on campus? (e.g. graduate office, graduate study room, cafe, etc)

Q11 What floor is your carrel located on?

- 3 (1)
- 4 (2)
- 5 (3)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (5)

Q12 What is your field of study?
Q13 What is your status?

- Master's candidate (1)
- PhD candidate (2)
- Other: (3) ____________________

Q14 Do you have any additional thoughts to share about your carrel?