

Graduate reading room usage

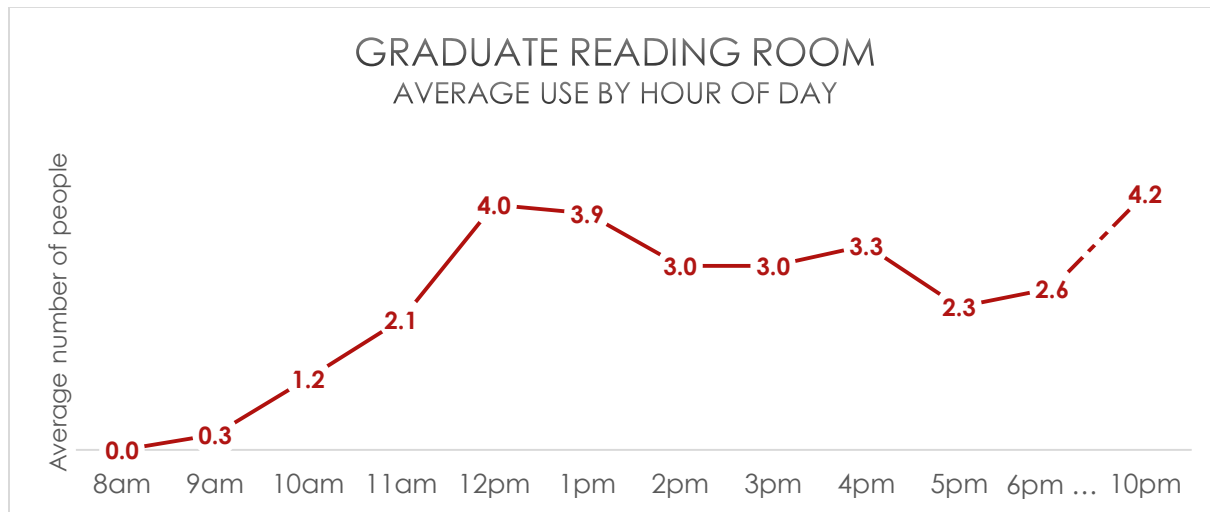
Background¹

From November 12th to December 12th the Assessment & User Experience (AUX) department staff and student workers conducted headcounts several times per day Monday through Friday² in the Graduate Reading Room on the second floor of Perkins Library. The goal of this short observational study was to better understand usage patterns and volume in the space. The number of observations on a given day ranged from 1-7, with 88 total observations collected. The majority of observations were taken between 10am and 5pm due to AUX staff availability; Research and Instructional Services and Access and Delivery Services staff members Stephanie Ford and Seth McCurdy recorded a number of evening observations in the hours of 6-6:59pm and 10-10:59pm. This report does not provide information on use of the graduate reading room on the weekend or from 7pm-9:59pm and 11pm-7:59am. AUX made efforts to have at least one morning observation and one afternoon observation in a given day.³

Findings

Usage is relatively low before noon. The majority of observed peak average⁴ daytime usage occurs between 12pm and 1:59pm, as shown in Figure 1. However, the study room has the highest total average usage from 10-10:59pm – the only late evening hour for which data was gathered. It is likely that usage is high at other late hours that were not observed in this study.

FIGURE 1



¹ For more information, please contact emily.daly@duke.edu

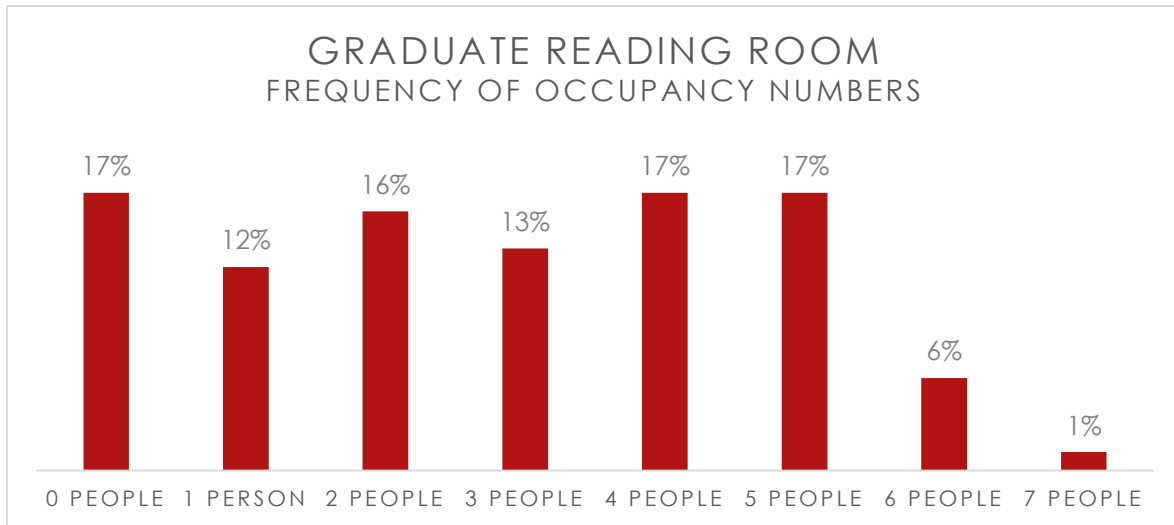
² Only one count was taken on a Saturday.

³ "Morning" is defined as 8am-12:59pm, "afternoon" as 1pm-5:59pm, and "evening" as 6pm-10:59pm.

⁴ The average used is a mean. We have to analyze data by average instead of total because there were more observations conducted during certain hours of the day or days of the week, which skews totaled numbers.

Figure 2 below shows that the number of students present in the room during any given observation ranged from zero to seven, with the most frequently observed occupancy at zero, four, and five (each a frequency of 15, or 17% of observations). The room was occupied by 4 or more people during 40% of observations and by 0-3 students during 58% of observations.

FIGURE 2



Data was also analyzed by day of the week (shown in Figure 3). Analysis of average usage shows an interesting pattern: usage peaks on Monday and falls throughout the week through Friday. Data was not gathered for Saturday or Sunday.

FIGURE 3

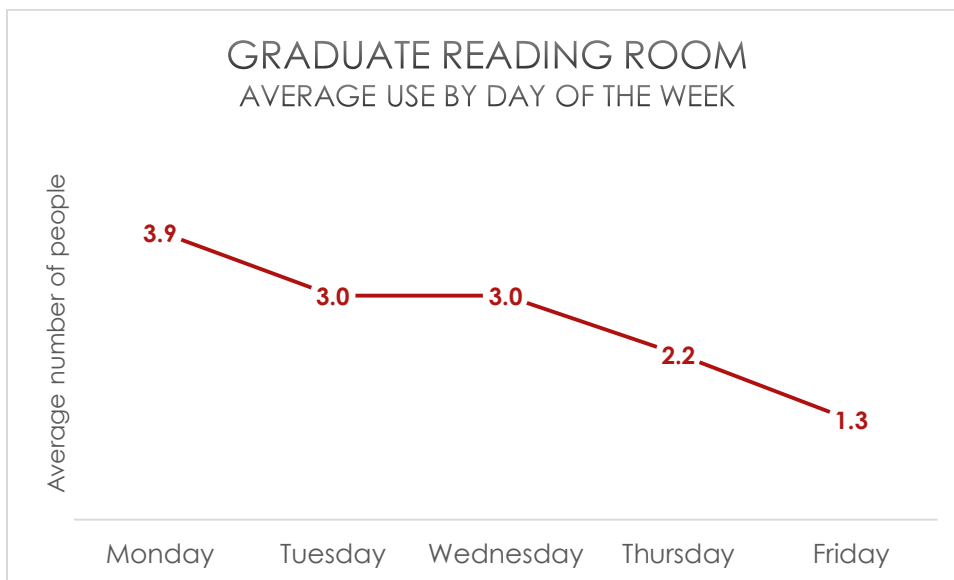
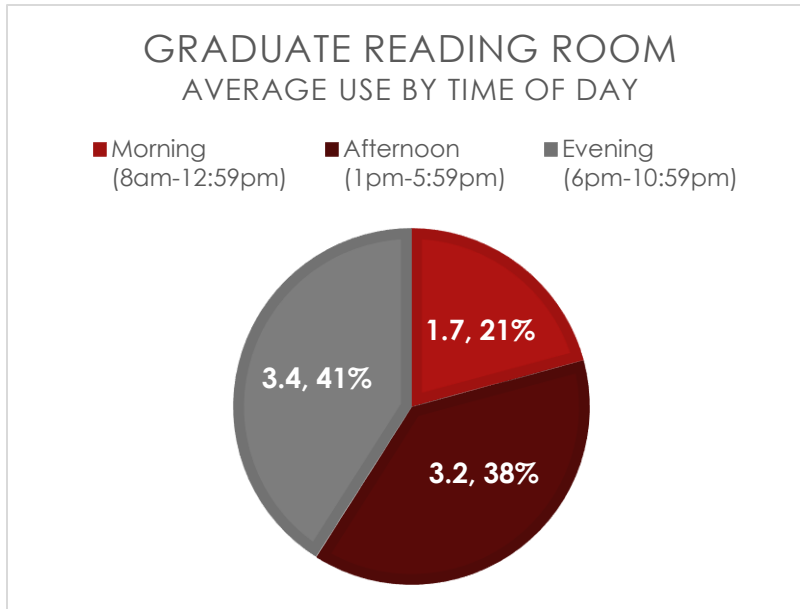


FIGURE 4



Based on observations, the graduate reading room is used much more heavily in the afternoon and evening than in the morning. We have no information on how the room is used from 7pm-9:59pm or from 11pm-7:59am; however, based on high usage observed at 10:00pm it is likely that there is high usage during some other time periods in the evening as well.

Potential issues with the data

- The month-long data collection period includes finals week, when student behavior may be different from other times of the semester.
- Only the end of Fall semester is represented in the current sample. It is possible this is not representative of year-round behavior.
- We have no data on how the room is used from 7pm-9:59pm or from 11pm-7:59am, and little data on how the room is used from 8am-9:59am.