

## Library Performance Pledge Report 2004

The Library has been implementing the Performance Pledge Project for several years now. The main objective is to encourage and to insure all library staff to provide quality service to the reading public in accordance with the itemized Service Pledge that had been announced to the public from time to time. With the experience gained during the past few years and continuous improvements that have been made, the overall undertaking of this project is coming to fruition. The positive result of this undertaking, particularly in the various aspects of the front line services, can be amply demonstrated in the University's Assessment and User survey. However, this undertaking is a long-term commitment on our part and we will continuously make further improvement in all those areas where deficiencies still exist. Our over-all performance in relation to the Performance Pledge Project during the year 2004 is hereby summed-up as follows:.

### 1. Achievement

There is marked improvement in all categories detailed in our Performance Pledge. It shows a 100% attainment rate to all categories in our pledged frontline services. All other pledged items have also achieved a rate of 90% or better attainment. Please see the table below for details.

Type of Service	Handling Time	Achievement	Remarks
<i>Loan Service</i>			
1. Time of line-up & handling : Normal hours	8 minutes	100%	
2. Time of line-up & handling : Rush hours (11:00-14:30)	10 minutes	100%	
3. Special materials	10 minutes	100%	
<i>Application</i>			
4. Checkout procedure (UM users)	2 minutes	100%	
5. Library borrowing card (external users)	5 working days	100%	
6. Borrowing card taking (external users)	3 minutes	100%	
7. Handling checkout & Deposit refund procedure (external users)	8 working days	100%	
<i>Loss</i>			
8. Handling of "library item lost" procedure	3 working days	100%	
9. Handling of "library card lost" procedure	3 working days	100%	
<i>Acquisition</i>			
10. Handling requisition form & sending out order	7 working days	96 %	1. The Library Automation System has recently been upgraded and our staff needs to gain familiarity of it through frequent practice. 2. There have been just too many requisitions to handle them for an grossly insufficient

			number of staff to do the job
<b>11. Handling gift materials</b>	7 working days	99 %	Large donations of gift materials: letters of acknowledging receipts were sent always within the pledged time-frame period, but it took time to sort out the needed materials to have them cataloged. About 2,500 gift items were processed up to the end of December 2004.
<b><i>Cataloging</i></b>			
<b>12. Cataloging urgent request (1-5 items)</b>	2 working days	94 %	The reason for books which could not be found may be due to temporary or permanent missing status. We normally keep on tracking down them for 3 months.
<b>13. Cataloging urgent request (6-10 items)</b>	4 working days	—	No requests received in this category.
<b><i>E-mail Reference Service</i></b>			
<b>14. Providing reference service / assistance to online and / or distant clients</b>	7 working days	94 %	1. The period encompasses public holidays and during which time the databases are usually maintained. Therefore the handling time has been longer than anticipated. 2. Users continued to ask questions uninterruptedly by public holidays 3. Some inquiries need to be further consulted with other institutions.

## **2. Further Improvements in Progress**

- **Changes of Pledged Service Items**

Starting from May of 2003, we cancelled the items related to maxima time length allowed for borrowing, reserving and renewal of books. Instead, we substituted it by setting up a maximum time allowed for waiting in order to be served. After one year's experiment, this practice meets the users' requirement.

During the year 2004, all pledged service areas remained constant. For further improvement of our frontline services, we plan to add one more item; namely, "Replying to reader(s) requests in locating books" to become effective starting in March this year. In the past, when readers placed a request for locating a missing book, we did not set a deadline for a definite response. We will pledge to respond such request within a period of 3 working days. This added service pledge will be announced to the public in the near future so as to ensure the public our commitment to quality service.

In addition, the pledged item of “Cataloging urgent request for 6-10 items for 4 working days” by the Technical Processing Unit will be cancelled as there was none of such request received between the years 2003 to 2004. However, our commitment to this practice will continue as it will be noted in the internal Working Manual of the cataloging unit.

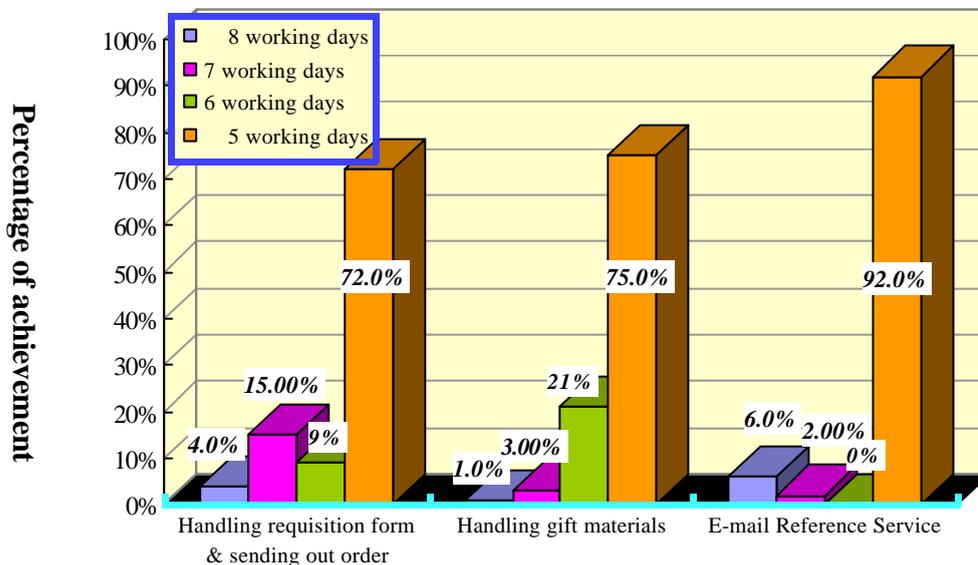
● **Improvement**

In cooperation with the University’s ISO 9000’s Quality Services for “Continuing Improvement Plan”, our front line staff participated in several mission-oriented activities and obtained rich experience from them. Under such programs, the long-standing problems of disorderliness of shelving and piles of materials waiting for shelving have negatively affected the searching of needed library material on the book stacks have been resolved. We devised a new way that has improved our working efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, we are greatly encouraged as we have received the University’s Championship award for winning the frontline service competition.

● **Trend of analysis**

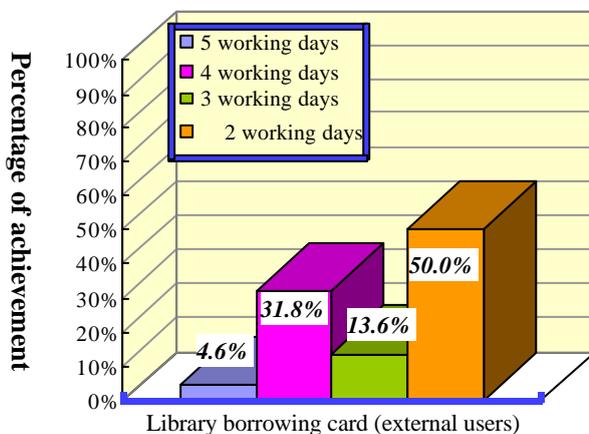
In order to evaluate the Performance Pledge project sufficiently, we analyzed all those areas/items that take more than 5 days to deliver the service. The following diagram demonstrates the service areas that need further improvement.

**Trend of Library Performance Pledge**



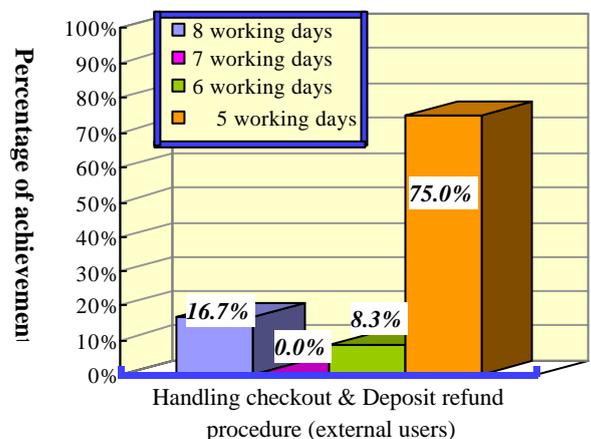
**Type of Service (Pledged time is 7 working days)**

**Trend of Library Performance Pledge**



**Type of Service (Pledged time is 5 working days)**

**Trend of Library Performance Pledge**



**Type of Service (Pledged time is 8 working days)**

### **3. Improved responsiveness to readers' needs**

In the past years, we have focused on the implementation and improvement of Library's Performance Pledge by continuously soliciting readers' comments and suggestions orally since most of our services were rendered individually on a face to face basis.

#### **● Intensified publicity**

In order to give support to government's objectives and UM's promotion on Performance Pledge Project, the Library has kept on publicizing our pledged service items and relevant statistics on the Library's bulletin boards. The slogan sign of "Library Performance Pledge, Reader-Oriented Quality Service" was prominently displayed at the Circulation Counter. It serves not only as a reminder and encouragement to our own frontline staffs, but also as a way to show the library's sincerity and tenacity in our pledge for our commitment to quality service delivery.

#### **● Difficulties and solutions**

The newly installed library's automation system does not handle all of our unique local operations as we would like. For instance, the system cannot process the function of suspending readers' borrowing privilege according to our Library regulations in the case of a loaned-out book that is overdue (It can only assess a fine). This often creates a great confusion to our readers and also adds pressure to the frontline staff. Although we have reported this problem to the system vendor to make necessary adjustment to the system, it is nonetheless still not implemented. Our temporary stop-gap measure to this problem is to adopt a flexible attitude and to resolve each individual case on its own merit.

In addition, while we received large numbers of donated books (i.e. more than 2,500 volumes), to the extent that we couldn't process them within our pledged time-frame, we simplified the procedure so as to process as many of them expeditiously as possible. At the same time, we also keep the public informed as to the reasons for our processing delay in developing public understanding and trust.

Last but not least, the Public Access Unit has developed a guideline of service manner for front line staff. This guideline is placed on the circulation counter serving as a reminder to the staff about the importance of enthusiasm and friendliness in rendering their services. Also, in responding to a survey that the English language skill is left much to be desired of the frontline service staff, we invited an English teacher to provide a series of custom-tailored English lessons to our frontline service people.

#### **● Front line service evaluation**

The result of UM's ISO service quality survey shows that the library's services are making steady improvement. The students and staffs graded library service for "3.61" and "3.86" (5 highest) respectively. In addition, the recent UM Committee (Team of 2 UM professors, one master student and 2 faculty students), evaluated 16 departments' front line services, the Library won 3 prizes as well as the award of "Best Front Line department."

In conclusion, with the launching of the performance pledge, the library front line services, as well as library services in all other areas have shown marked improvement. This is amply reflected in two recent surveys conducted separately by the Library and the University. It is most gratifying to say that the efforts that our staff has conscientiously put into their work are now being gradually recognized and appreciated by the reading public and by the University as well. The Library is becoming more professionally sophisticated and confident in keeping pace with the growth of its professional peers in this region in general and in giving timely and adequate support to the various academic, educational and cultural programs to its University clientele in particular.