AJCU's "AskALibrarian24/7" Virtual Reference Annual Report

Written by Syed Khan, Chair of AJCU VR Steering Committee 2010-11

Presented by Susan Gardner (LMU AJCU VR Coordinator)

Background

- 24/7 AJCU VR live chat cooperative started in Sept. 2004

- Designated coordinator from each participating school

- Steering Committee oversees contracts, meetings, and service

- Current members: Syed Khan (chair), Donna Mazziotti, Kristen Shuyler (past chair), Jill Spreitzer, Susan Wardzala (upcoming chair)

Software

- Vendor = Tutor.com

- Hired librarians at Tutor.com staff the service from midnight-9am (EST)

- Also staff it many weekend/evening hours; much of the summer; during some holidays

- 40% of our questions answered by Tutor.com

Pricing

- 5 biggest schools pay $6,053/yr and answer questions 8 hours/week

- 9 medium sized schools pay $4,035/yr and answer questions 6 hours/week

- 3 smaller schools pay $2,018/yr and answer questions 4 hours/week

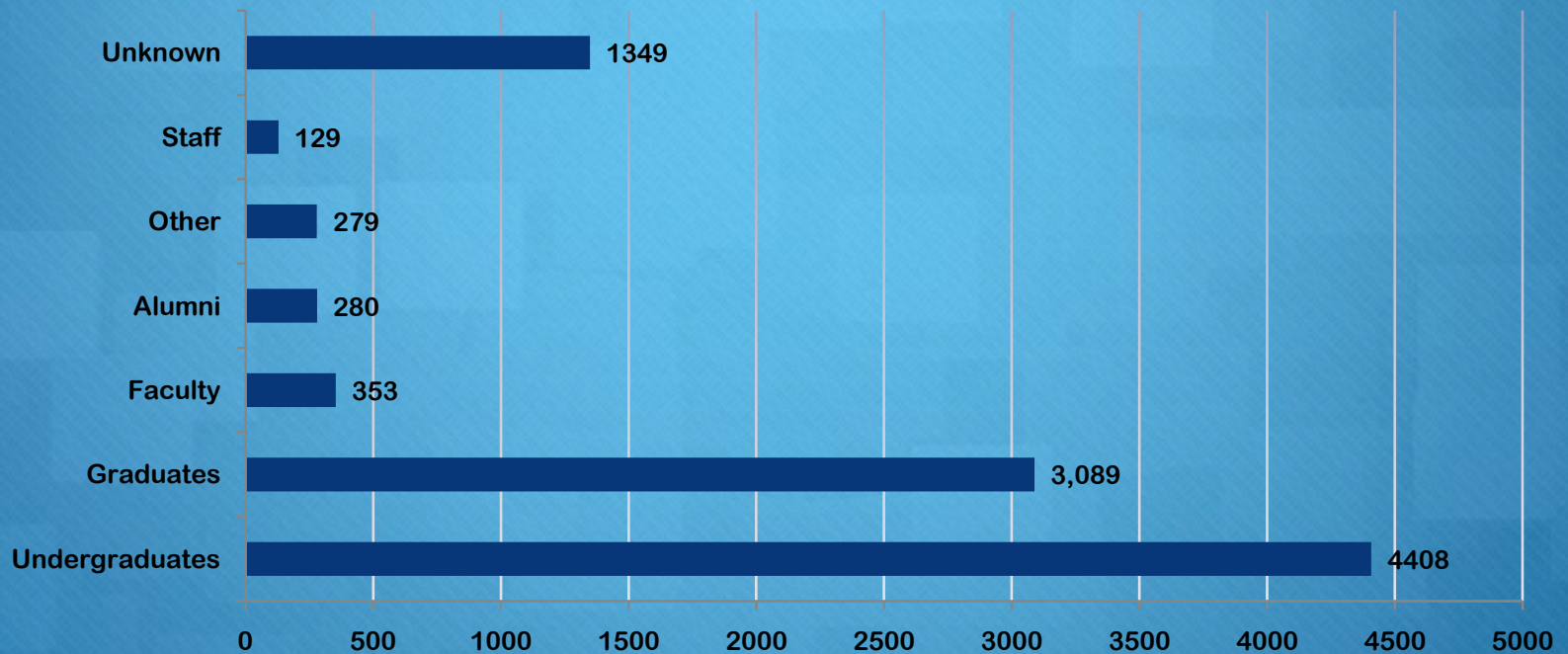- Each school pays $12/yr for scheduling software

Hours We Staff

- Monday-Thursday 9am-midnight

- Friday 9am-8pm

- Saturday & Sunday noon-7pm

- We answer 60% of our questions

Questions Asked Per Year
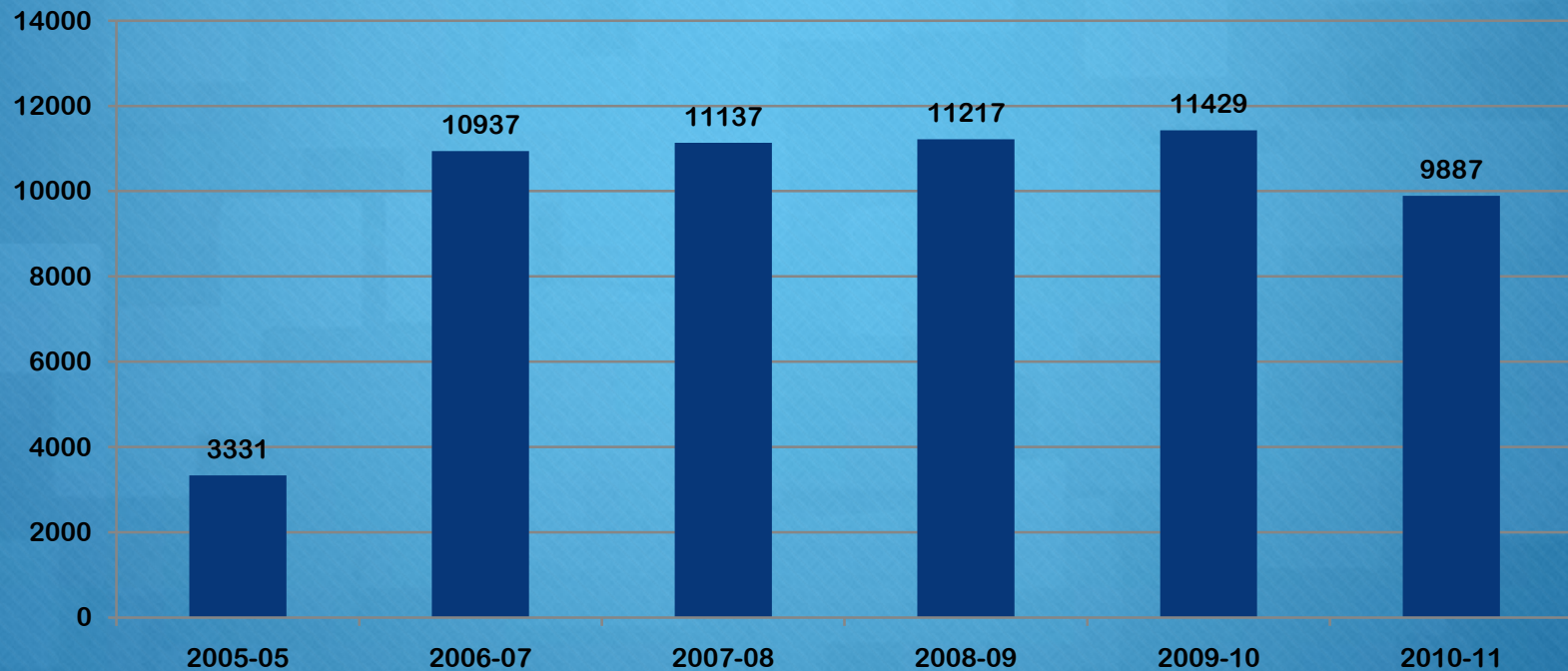
User Demographics

Top 10 Users 2010-11

1. Loyola Univ., Chicago (1908)
2. Fordham Univ. (1163)
3. Georgetown Univ. (1113)
4. Boston College (1017)
5. Notre Dame/Loyola, MD (710)
6. Regis Univ. (577)
7. Univ. of Scranton (519)
8. Seattle Univ. (467)
9. Loyola Univ., N.O. (376)
10. Santa Clara Univ. (346)

Most Popular Chat Days

- Monday (1531)
- Tuesday (1520)
- Wednesday (1420)
- Thursday (1246)
- Sunday (1054)
- Friday (984)
- Saturday (748)

Most Popular Chat Hours (EST)

- 2pm (619)
- 3pm (608)
- 4pm (601)
- 5pm (561)
- 10pm (556)
- 9pm (550)
- 8pm (515)
- 1pm (510)
- Noon (509)
- 6pm (505)
- 7pm (456)
- 11am (436)
- 11pm (413)
- Midnight (356)
- 10am (324)

- 1am (218)
- 2am (167)
- 3am (113)
- 8am (104)
- 4am (72)
- 7am (55)
- 5am (41)
- 6am (40)

More Statistics

- Average VR chat session this year 21 minutes

- Reflects many in-depth transactions

- Coordinators can also review transcripts and follow up with patron

- 5,710 respondents to optional satisfaction survey: 95+% recommend the service to a friend.

- 434 of survey respondents were using service from off campus; 100 on campus but not in library; 64 in the library

Concerns/Issues

○ **Tutor.com focused on tutoring service- no new development plans for VR software**

○ **Statistics package clunky**

○ **Doesn't work on Mac platform**

○ **Competitors (such as QuestionPoint, Altarama) have some of these features, but ultimately not as cost effective or offer summer/holiday coverage**

Yearly Recommendation

- Despite its flaws and increased usage of other supplemental services such as libraryh3lp, Meebo, Texting, etc.—we recommend staying with Tutor.com

- 24/7 Coverage is number one priority at point of need, irrespective of time or day of the week

User Feedback

○ "that's it – gotta love the Jesuits, this feature is great!"