

# Assessing Student Demand for Library Hours at UC Santa Cruz

Greg Careaga, Head of Assessment & Planning, University of California, Santa Cruz

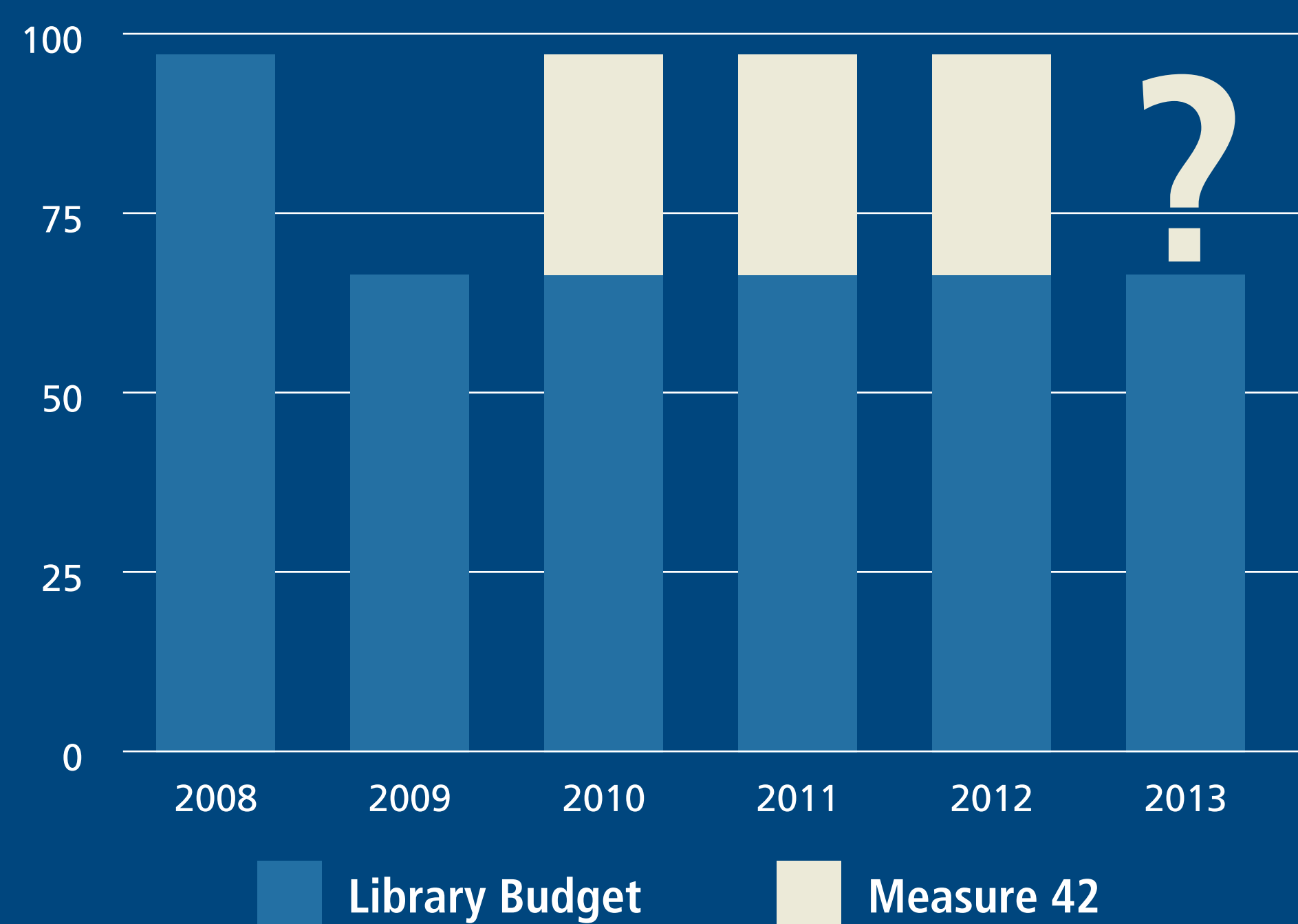
## Background:

From 2007 to 2009, the UCSC University Library budget was cut by 23%. As a result, we reduced FY 2009 operating hours for our two campus libraries by 31%.

Students weren't pleased. They staged a series of library occupations and overnight study-ins. At the end of the year—and to our great surprise—they bailed us out.

Students passed Measure 42, a temporary \$6.50 per student per quarter levy to restore 2008 operating hours.

Weekly Library Hours



*We had three years to figure it out*

From 2010 to 2012, we absorbed additional budget cuts; our FY 2012 budget was 31% smaller than it had been in FY 2007. We had canceled serials, reduced monographs budgets and had not replaced staff lost to attrition. We petitioned the campus—unsuccessfully—to restore funding for library hours. Halfway through the last year of the subsidy, we hadn't figured it out.



# UC SANTA CRUZ

# UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

## 2012 Library hours survey

We created a short web survey to get student input with these goals in mind:

- Measure how they valued library hours with respect to their academic success
- Discover which subsidized library hours were most important to them
- Gauge their support for extending the Measure 42 library subsidy

**Timing:** We ran the survey December 3-7, 2012, the last full week of fall quarter.

**Publicity:** We linked to the survey via the Library's website and social media outlets, and placed flyers in campus bus shelters and college mailrooms.

**Deployment:** We tabled in front of the two campus libraries for thirty hours over five days.

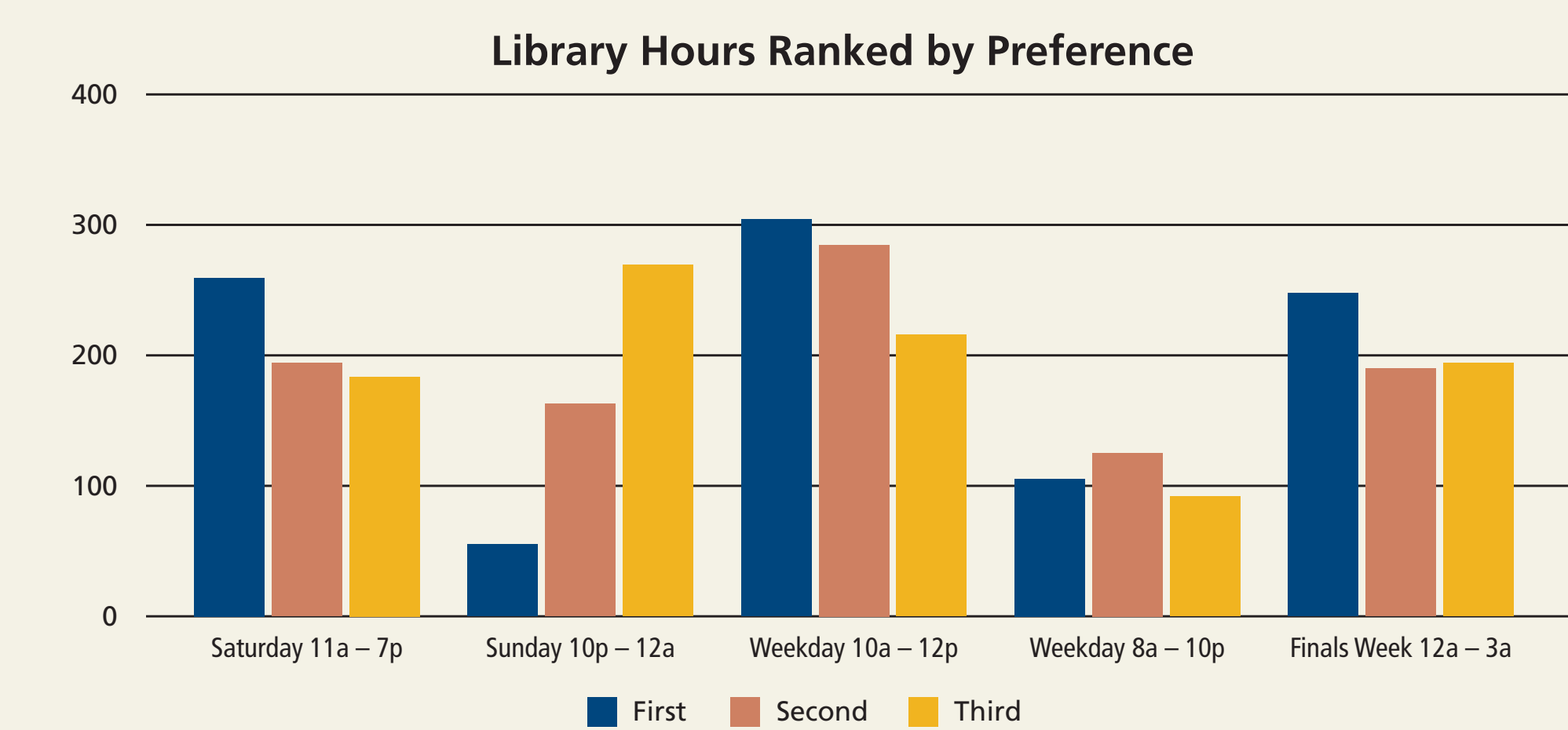


### Results

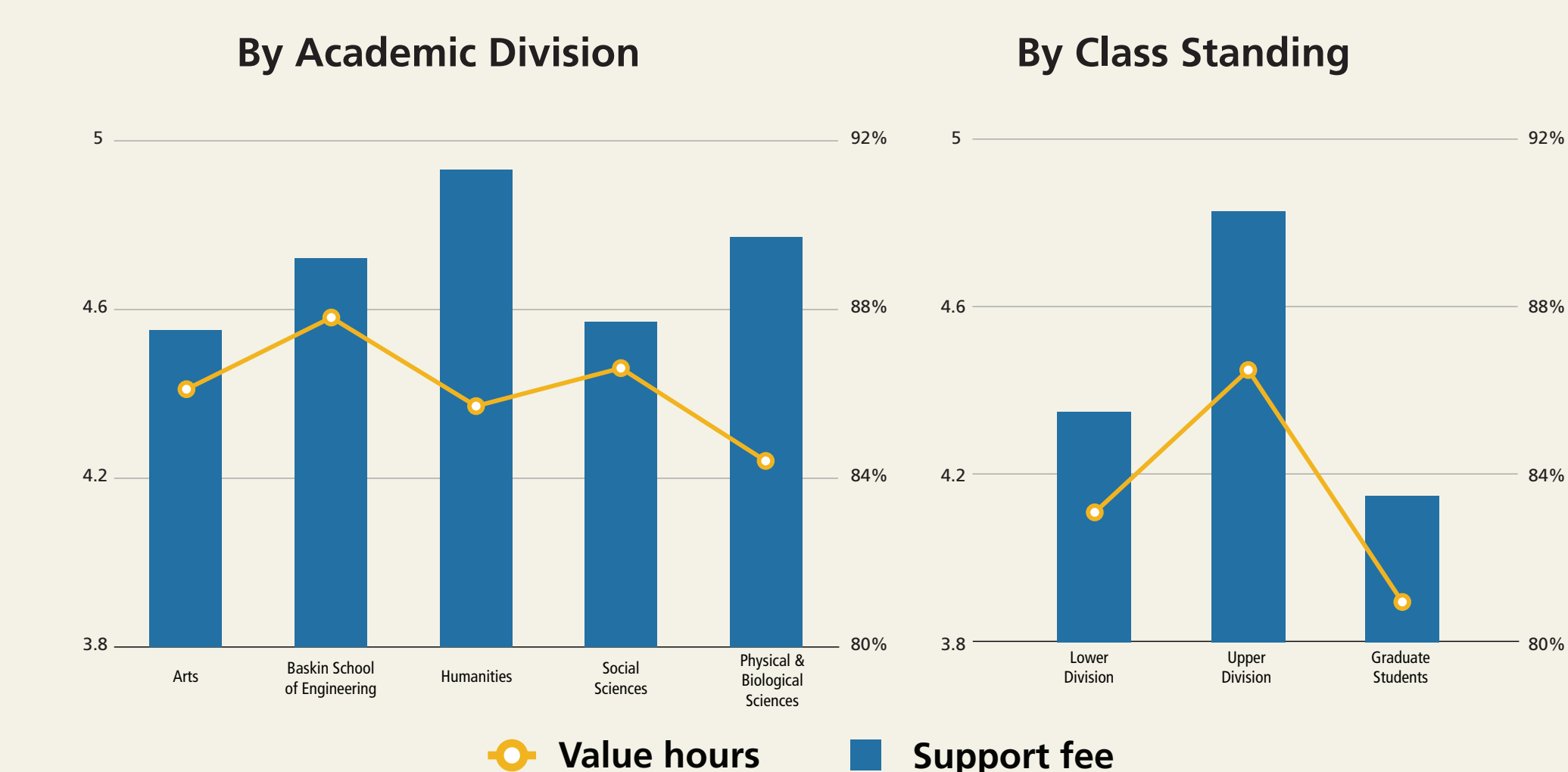
987 students (5.8% of the population) completed the survey.

Students reported that library hours were very important to their academic success.  $\bar{x} = 4.37$  on a five-point scale.

Many more students selected weekday evening hours than weekday 11a morning hours. They selected Saturday hours more often than we anticipated based on gate count.



88.2% of students responded that they would support extending the \$6.50 fee.



When considering how well students' regard for the value of library hours aligned with their willingness to support an extension of the \$6.50 per quarter fee, class standing was a closer fit than academic discipline.

### Caveats

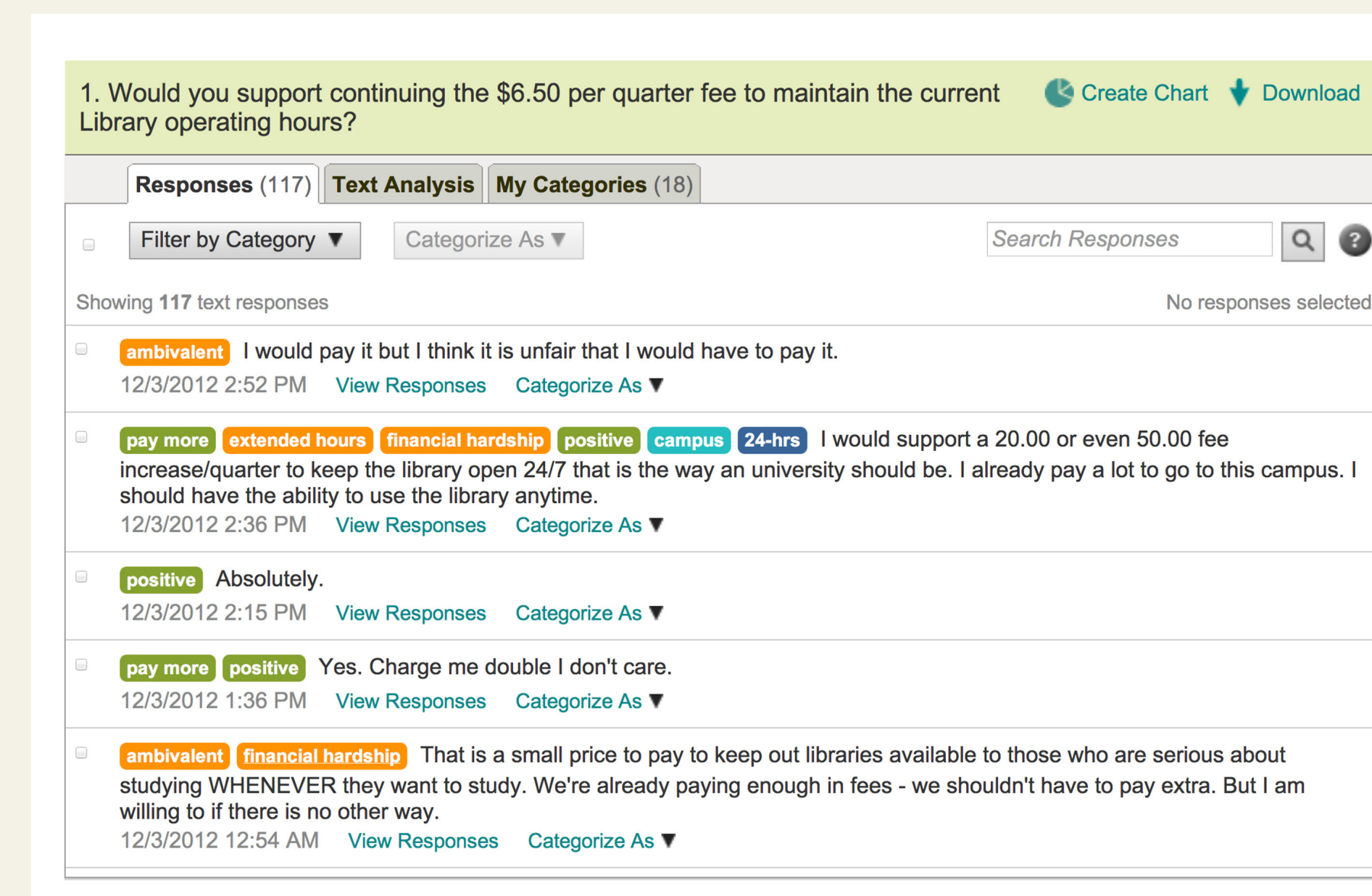
- Our outreach and tabling were more likely to reach students who were already in the library's virtual and physical spaces—our users
- Students may have been more sensitive than usual to their academic progress in the week before final exams

### Qualitative data

We gave students an opportunity to add comments to most of the questions. We received 797.

*"I have an extraordinarily busy schedule and I live in a large house. It's hard to focus on the immense amount of work I must do anywhere other than the studious environment the library provides."*

We used SurveyMonkey's "My Categories" function to code these comments in an attempt to organize and understand them.



### We learned:

1. Home environments, both on and off campus, are distracting. Students see the library as a refuge.
2. Even the students who were willing to continue the \$6.50 fee for current hours thought it was the responsibility of the campus to fund these hours.
3. Students wanted hours beyond the status quo and were willing to pay for them.

## Outcomes

The campus decided to restore funding for library hours, and Measure 42 expired after the scheduled three years.

Student government proposed a new referendum, Measure 58, to fund a three-year 24/5 pilot in the Science & Engineering Library.

## Lessons learned

### 1. Pretest to improve accuracy

When we asked students to identify themselves by academic division, 28 chose 'graduate division.' When we asked them to identify themselves by their academic standing, 83 indicated that they were graduate students.

### 2. Have a plan for coding qualitative data

Coding on the fly is iterative and time-consuming. The SurveyMonkey's "My Categories" tool was adequate but not ideal.

### 3. Partnership drives results

We worked closely with student government to develop and deploy the survey. They were very deeply invested in the outcomes and led the efforts to write and campaign for the 24/5 referendum.

### 4. Text sells

Student narrative influenced campus administrators in a way that the Library's more traditional metrics had not.



### Acknowledgement

*The 2012 Library hours survey and the 24/5 library referendum would not have been possible without the hard work and support of the UCSC Student Union Assembly. We remain their grateful partners.*