

# Riding the Wave: Embracing New Trends in the Wake of COVID-19

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The Lamar Soutter Library has historically relied on service usage statistics to inform which of its services, programs, and classes should continue and what new offerings should be developed. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, most library instruction sessions (94%) were held in-person, while only 3% were conducted virtually. As classes went online, telework tools became commonplace and easier to use, leading to a near total shift in the opposite direction. At the height of the pandemic 93% of library sessions occurred virtually, as compared to the 2.5% that continued to take place in-person. The rollout of vaccines and the ever more strident call to “return to normal” did not see another reversal; instead, virtual instruction remains the preferred option at 75%, while in-person sessions have made up less than 22% of sessions between September 2021-2022. This data has informed our library’s policy shift toward virtual-first instruction development and focus on harnessing the crests and opportunities as well as addressing the troughs that come along with this shift.

Crests	Troughs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hybrid working environment preferred by majority of staff</li> <li>Flexible meeting offerings allow for broader availability</li> <li>Reaching new populations by being able to offer to meet patrons where they are (including satellite locations, distance learners)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perception of library visibility as being diminished by librarians working remotely</li> <li>Concerns about university policy leading to reallocation of space previously used by the library and staff</li> <li>Reports of staff feeling less engaged or isolated – feeling 'out of the loop'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building new relationships by capitalizing on new opportunities in the virtual setting</li> <li>Re-imagining our clinical support and making plans to refresh our approach to clinical education and outreach</li> <li>Better integration with the curriculum via online instruction and materials</li> </ul>

## Changing Levels of Virtual Instruction

