CARLI Resource Sharing Committee
Annual Project 2019

Introduction

For its 2018-2019 annual project, the CARLI Resource Sharing Committee decided to review the Universal Borrowing Standard Consortial policies and suggest possible revisions. The I-Share Universal Borrowing standards were fully implemented across the consortium in 2012, and the Committee saw a need to review the policies to make sure they reflected the current requirements of library patrons at CARLI I-Share member institutions.

Committee members reviewed the Universal Borrowing Standardized Policies Chart and highlighted the specific standards they felt were most in need of updating. After discussing the current UB policies together, the Committee members decided that the most effective way to gather input to inform the Committee's recommendations would be to distribute an electronic survey to the I-Share member libraries. In the process of analyzing the standards, the Committee determined a need to make the survey questions as specific as possible, while avoiding tying the questions to a specific platform, such as Voyager.

After narrowing down the full list of standards to those which might merit revision, the Committee put together a survey and then distributed it via the CARLI Resource Sharing email list. In addition to asking for participants' feedback on the proposed changes to the standards, the survey requested participants to provide their contact information for possible follow-up, with the promise that the information would be kept confidential. Overall, 67 CARLI member libraries responded, with some institutions having more than one staff member respond. The total number of individual responses to the survey was 111, although individual questions had anywhere from 109 to 111 responses. The survey ran from January 17 to February 15, 2019.

CARLI staff liaisons compiled the survey results (see below) and then shared them with the Committee. As shown below, the consensus response for some policies was to keep them the same, while the feedback on other policies suggested that the respondents thought changes were necessary. In view of the latter group of responses, in addition to some Voyager data analysis, Committee members discussed updates to the Universal Borrowing Standard Policy that they would ultimately like to propose to the CARLI Executive Board. After the Committee began its work on this project, the CARLI I-Share Next Task Force selected the Ex Libris Alma system as the replacement to Voyager. While there are some changes to the Universal Standard policies desired by the members, due to the Alma implementation, the Committee has tabled making formal recommendations to the CARLI Board at this time.

Summarized and annotated results from I-Share Standard Policy Survey

On the following pages, you'll find each of the questions the Committee asked the I-Share member libraries, along with a graph showing the tallied responses. Above each graph, the Committee summarizes the results for the question. Below each graph, the Committee has included further analysis, along with sample quotes pulled from the responses received.

1) **Loan period for print materials, such as books, music scores, periodicals, etc. (Currently: 28 days)**
Responses indicate a preference, by a wide margin of 94%, to keep the current loan period of 28 days for print materials.

Count of Loan period for print materials, such as books, music scores, periodicals, etc. (Currently: 28 days)
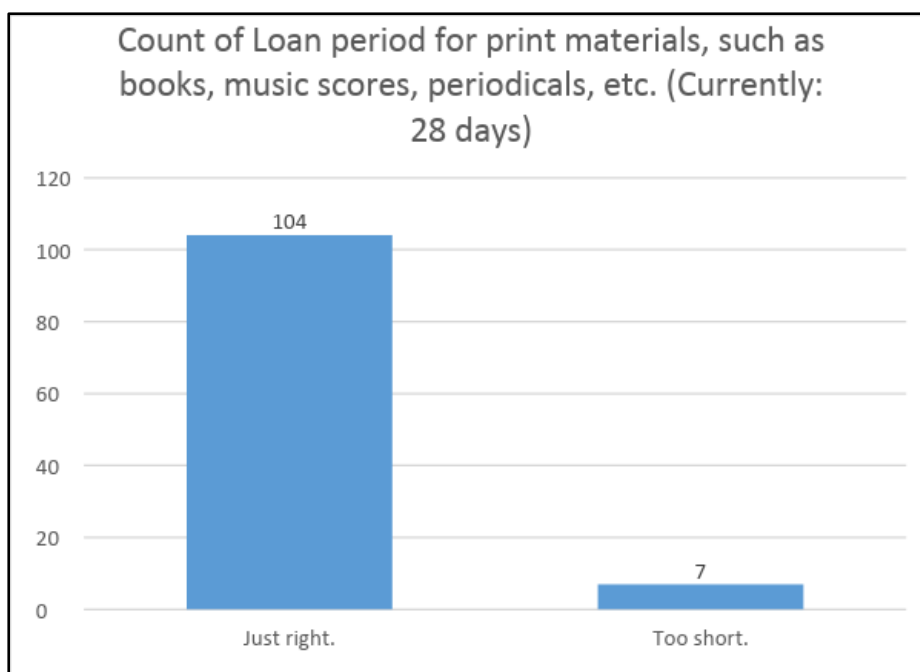
Although only 7 respondents considered the current policy too short, we did get a few comments suggesting a longer check-out period for faculty from some who had selected "just right." The consensus seemed to be that 28 days was fine for students. In fact some of those who wanted a longer check-out period suggested one fewer renewal, so that the total amount allowed would not change considerably.

Sample "Just right" quote: *"This time frame seems to work well for patrons; I have never received any complaints that it is too short or too long."*

Sample "Too short" quote: *"As someone who has dealt with a lot of overdue issues, I think longer would be better, to avoid some of those issues. Maybe 6 weeks (42 days), instead of 4 weeks (28 days). With a longer checkout period, I would suggest 1 less [sic] renewal, so the maximum time would be only 14 days longer."*

2) Loan period for non-print materials, such as videos, cds, microfilm, etc. (Currently: 14 days)

The majority of respondents (65%) are satisfied with the 14-day loan period for non-print items, while only 25% feel it is too short.

Count of Loan period for non-print materials, such as videos, cds, microfilm, etc. (Currently: 14 days)

| Just right.	Too long.	Too short.	Unsure or N/A
72	1	28	10
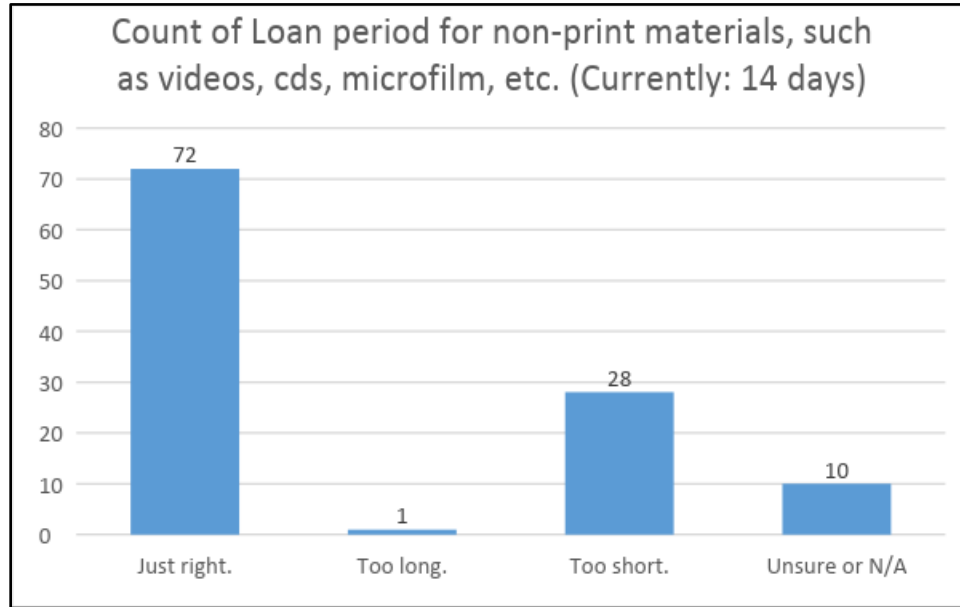
We can see the majority of respondents were happy with the current policy, but, nonetheless, 25% did wish for a longer check-out period. Comments showed that the reasoning was divided between wishing to curb the confusion of different items having varying check-out periods versus a need to use the materials longer. Comments suggest that, in general, the respondents were considering the borrowing of DVDs, even though the question was directed at all non-print materials.

> **Sample "Just right" quote**: *"It's okay, but I wouldn't mine [sic] if it were the same length as print."*

> **Sample "Too short" quote:** *"Especially for movie DVDs, patrons have sometimes commented that they would like to be able to keep them the same length of time as books and other materials (28 days), either because they did not have an opportunity to watch the film or would like to view it again."*

3) Number of renewals for print materials (Currently: 3 renewals for UBReg patrons [typically students and staff] and 6 renewals for UBLong patrons [typically faculty and administrators])

Again, a majority of responses, 70%, indicate that libraries are satisfied with the current number of renewals for print materials, with 19% finding it too many.

Count of Number of renewals for print materials
(Currently: 3 renewals for UBReg patrons
[typically students and staff] and 6 renewals for
UBLong patrons [typically faculty and
administrators])

Category	Count
Just right.	77
Too few.	7
Too many.	21
Unsure or N/A	5
(blank)	
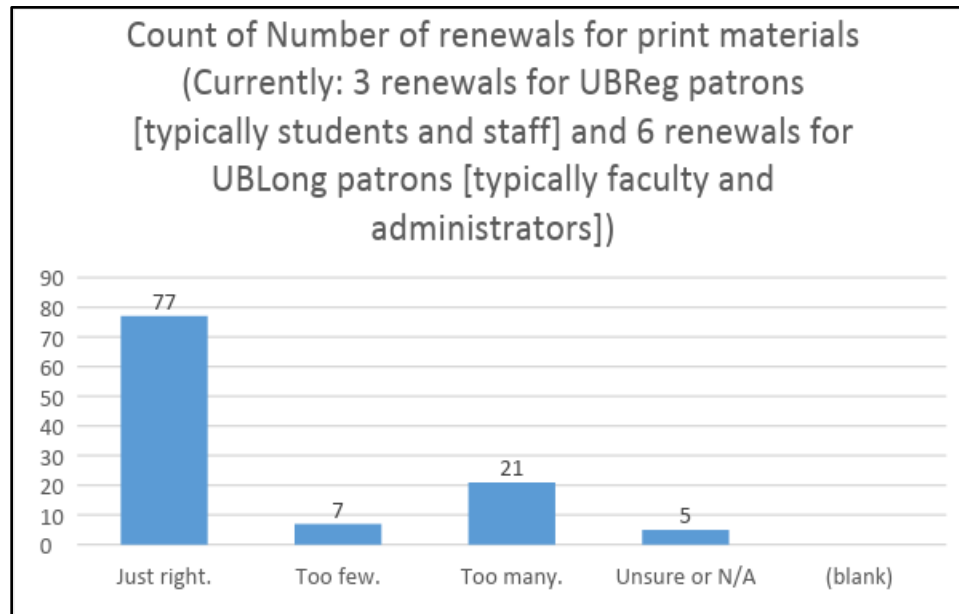
Here again, we see that most respondents were satisfied with the policy as is, although some comments were again left by those choosing "just right." Most of those who would like to see adjustment felt that faculty were given too many renewals. Comments regarding students tended to focus on the checking out of textbooks. A few respondents wanted to see students allowed to check out textbooks for the semester, whereas a higher number took issue with students keeping books for the semester, regardless of items going overdue or to lost, thus depriving others of access to these textbooks.

> **Sample "Just right" quote:** *"Three renewals allow students at universities on quarters or semesters to keep a book long enough to complete an academic term."*

> **Sample "Too few" quote**: *"I would move the UBReg renewals to 4 which would allow students to use an item for an entire semester."*

> **Sample "Too many" quote**: "*On the one hand, six renewals is a lot; faculty have been known to entirely forget they'd ever requested an item after that long (and so claim it was never checked out). On the other hand, students regularly exhaust their three renewals before the end of the semester and then keep the book while it's overdue so they can keep it through the end of the semester (and sometimes over the winter break as well). Then they're surprised or concerned about the possibility of late fees.*"

4) Should non-print materials be renewable? (Currently: not renewable)

Although these results are closer, the majority of respondents indicate that renewals should be allowed for non-print materials. Here, 52% wished to allow renewals, while 33% were against.

Count of Should non-print materials be renewable? (Currently: not renewable)
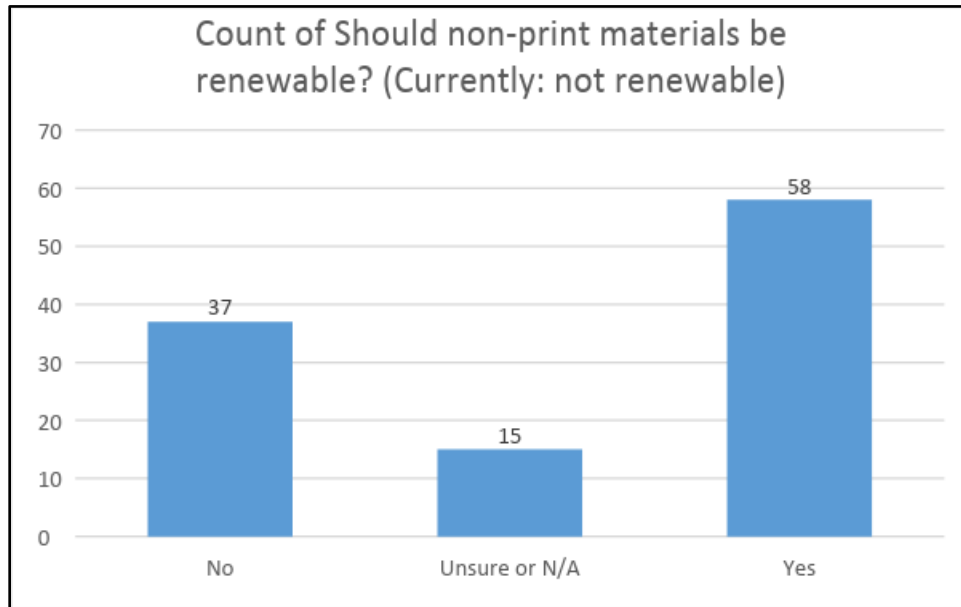
This was the first question where more respondents voted for a change in policy. The majority of comments suggested one renewal for a 14-day period. Many questioned the reasoning behind the policy, suggesting it was a remnant of when A/V materials were quite costly. What was also pointed out, however, was that many libraries do not loan non-print materials through I-Share as it is. The question, then, is whether a change in policy here would result in even less sharing.

Sample "Unsure or N/A" quote: *"It depends on the material itself. I think renewals should be made available, with the option for owning libraries to decline renewals for high-demand items."*

Sample "Yes" quote*: "DVD cases that contain multi disc sets should be eligible for a renewal as opposed to a one disc DVD case. It's sometimes impossible to watch countless hours of a season of a TV show in 2 weeks when work, family and life get in the way."*

5) Total number of overdue I-Share items across consortium before patron is blocked (Currently: 25 overdue I-Share items)

The responses for "Just right" and "Too many" are essentially the same (47% vs. 45%), so further examination would be needed here before any changes were to be recommended.
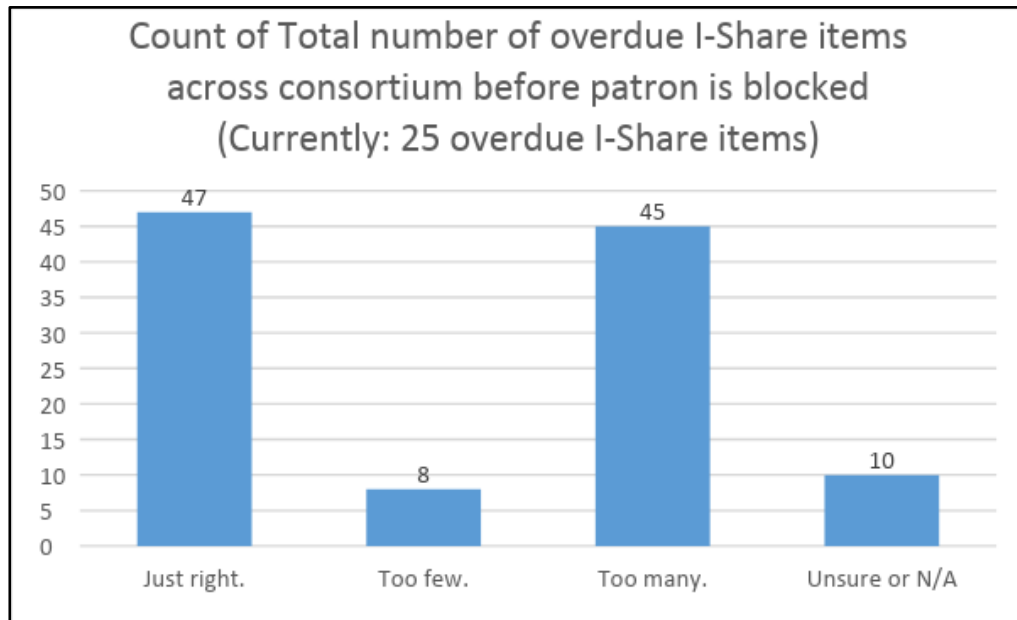

Most of the comments to this question were submitted by those finding the number of overdue items to be too high. Those wanting to see a change in policy suggested 5 to 15 items to be the limit, with just over half of those commenting preferring 10. Some argued the high number left libraries having to wait until 25 items accumulated before getting items returned. Suggestions were also made to have items from home libraries included with the total count. Respondents also brought up the problem of habitual offenders, although this is impossible to track, since this information is deleted immediately upon return of the items, and all counters set back.

> **Sample "Just right" quote:** "*This makes sense to me because so many of our patrons request a large number of items at the same time, and then have 15 books that are all just a few days overdue.*"

> **Sample "Too many" quote:** "*This seems too high. While it is understandable that some patrons might need to check out large numbers of materials for research purposes and accidentally neglect the due date, it still prevents other patrons from having timely access to the materials, particularly if there are few, or no, other copies available in I-Share. Ten or 15 would seem a more reasonable number.*"

6) Total number of lost I-Share items across consortium before patron is blocked (Currently: 3 lost I-Share items)

The majority of responses, 73%, indicate a satisfaction with the current total number of lost I-Share items before the patron is blocked from I-Share. The rest are rather evenly divided among too many or too few.

Count of Total number of lost I-Share items across consortium before patron is blocked (Currently: 3 lost I-Share items)

| Category	Count
Just right.	81
Too few.	10
Too many.	13
Unsure or N/A	7
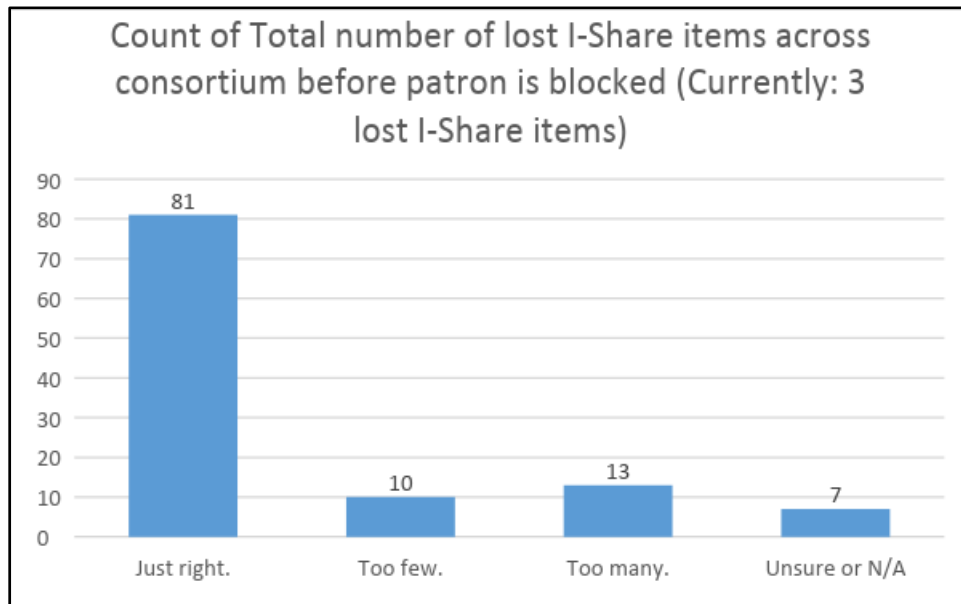
A large majority of respondents were happy with this policy. Those wanting a change pointed out that a library not receiving a book back has no course of action but to wait until the patron lets more items go to "lost" status, or to hope the borrowing library will block their patron if requested to do so. The concept of the habitual offenders came up again in comments here, even though the system is not set up to track this.

> **Sample "Too many" quote:** "*Patrons shouldn't be allowed to borrow any more items till they make restitution on any items they've lost; [sic] especially if they are habitual offenders and are irresponsible or disrespectful of the policies. We've blocked patrons and put charges on their account at their library and never saw the money for books that were never returned. Small budget libraries can't afford to replace everything that patrons never return.*"

7) Total amount owed across consortium before patron is blocked (Currently: $200)

62% of the respondents indicate that the current total amount owed across the consortium before the patron is blocked is a sufficient amount. 18% feel it is too much, 14% too little.

Count of Total amount owed across consortium before patron is blocked (Currently: $200)
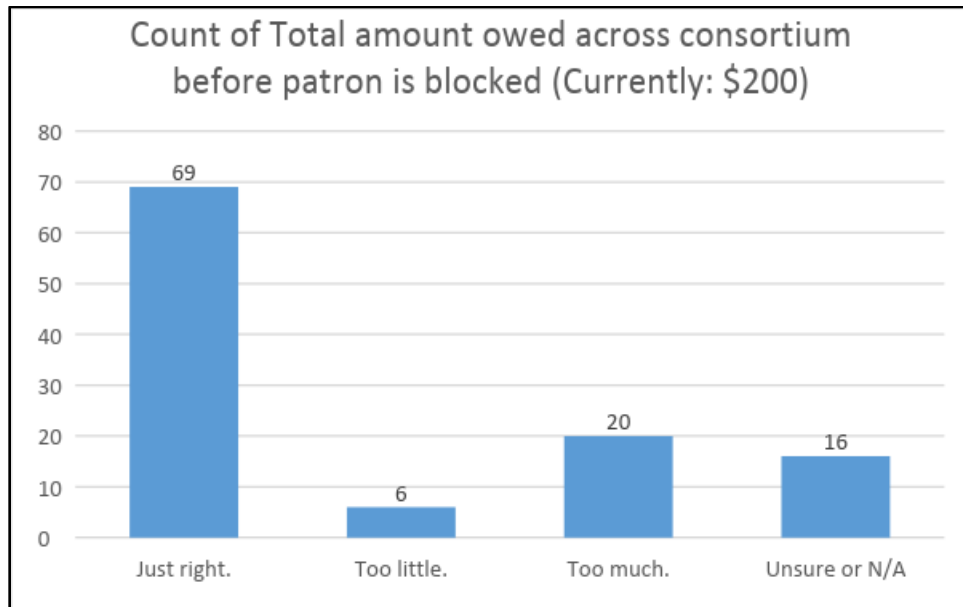
Here again, a majority prevails. Those that did seek a change suggested between $50.00 and $100.00. Respondents leaving comments felt that lending libraries are at the mercy of borrowing institutions when patrons neglect to pay their fines. This seemed more the issue than the amount itself.

Sample "Just right" quote: *"This number makes sense. Initially it sounds high, but not if you consider the processing fees and additional charges that many libraries add to the cost of the book."*

Sample "Too much" quote: *"A stricter policy will help with getting materials back."*

Sample "Unsure or N/A" quote*: "Collection of any owed money from patrons outside your own institution can be a challenge."*

8) Total amount owed at individual I-Share library before patron receives a fine/fee notice (Currently: $20)

76% of survey respondents indicate that the current amount of $20 owed at an individual I-Share library before the patron receives a fine/fee notice is a sufficient amount. The other responses were negligible.
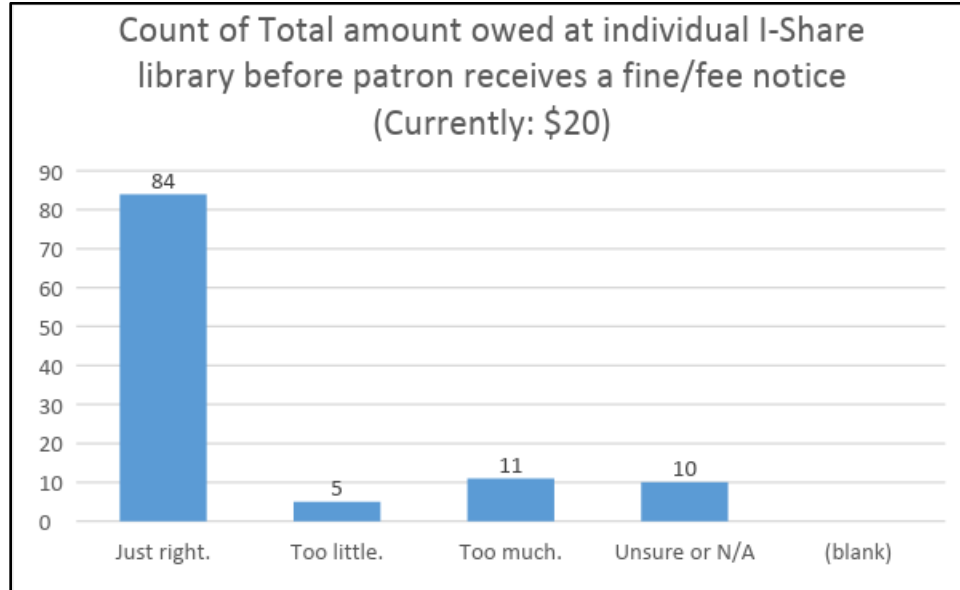

The majority of respondents saw the $20.00 fine as trigger for notices to be sufficient. Those opposed seemed to be from libraries that impose some smaller fines for lost materials, who are then worried that patrons are unaware of having any lost item replacement or lost item processing fines for those items. Others felt no need for notices to be sent until $50.00 are owed.

> **Sample "Too little" quote:** "*Patrons should receive notices sooner than that, so that they are aware of it earlier.. [sic] At least $10.*"

> **Sample "Unsure or N/A" quote:** "*Some books cost below $20.00; perhaps a patron should receive a fine/fee notice for any item once a lost status is applied to the item record.*"

9) Total number of overdue notices a patron should receive per item (Currently: 2 notices)

The majority of respondents (again, 76%) are satisfied with the current count of total number (2) of overdue notices that a patron should receive per item, although 19% did find this too few.

Count of Total number of overdue notices a patron should receive per item (Currently: 2 notices)
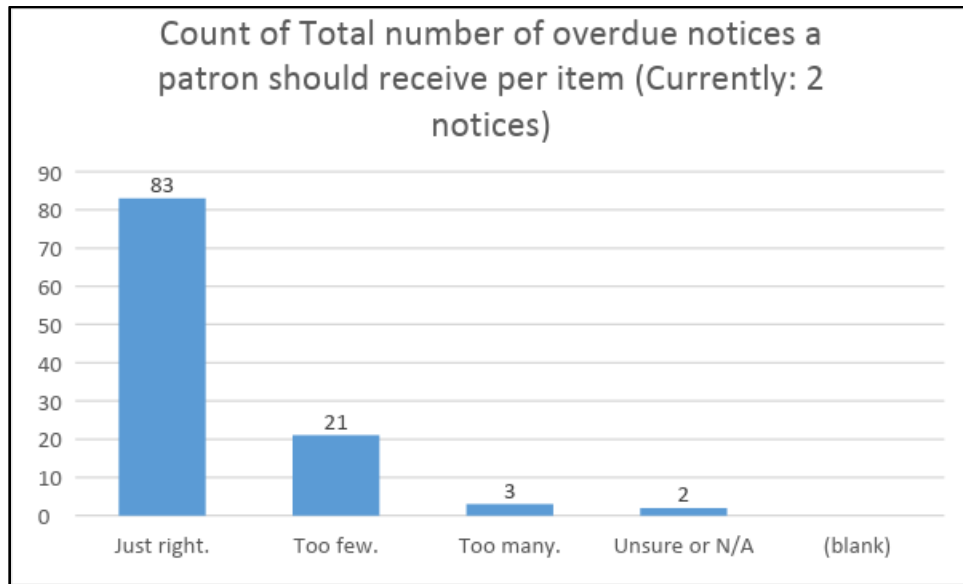
Most respondents felt no need to adjust this policy. Suggestions for increasing the number of notices ranged from one additional "gentle reminder" to "progressively stronger language." Some felt that email notices can be easily overlooked so more should be sent, while, for others, the intention is to annoy the patron enough so that they will take care of the issue.

Sample "Too few" quote: *"Students and faculty tend to have busier schedules as the semester goes on, causing them to forget about their library materials or lose overdue reminders in a sea of e-mails. An extra reminder might be a nice gentle nudge to return their materials."*

Sample "Too many" quote: *"Patrons who pay attention to library notices respond with the 1st notice. Those who do not, may or may not respond when they receive a bill. A courtesy notice of when the item will soon be due and 1 overdue notice before billing is plenty."*

Conclusions and Possible Future Directions for Study

As of the compilation of this report in May, 2019, the CARLI Office staff were still learning about Alma and the configuration of its circulation functions. As a result, the Resource Sharing Committee has decided that, until CARLI has had sufficient time to study and understand Alma's circulation ("fulfillment") policies and settings, the Committee should not make a formal recommendation on how to apply the information obtained through the survey and subsequent Committee discussions.

For further study, the CARLI Office staff and the I-Share member libraries participating in the Vanguard process may be able to provide feedback towards how I-Share resource sharing functions in Alma. Consortial standardization for resource sharing should remain a central part of "I-Share Next."

This project report is meant to be a summary of the Resource Sharing Committee's work and not a final proposal to the CARLI Executive Board. The committee suggests that UB Borrowing policies should be examined again after Alma implementation.