# 2024 TATIL Key Findings

## Introduction

A group of 101 seniors at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) took the Strategic Searching module of the "Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy" (TATIL). This standardized test, developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions and was proctored and administered locally by LMU library staff. The test measured students' knowledge in two key areas: planning, conducting, evaluating, and revising searches (assessed through 12 learning outcomes) and comparing and contrasting search tools (assessed through five learning outcomes). Additionally, the test measured the disposition of "productive persistence" through a set of four learning outcomes. After the test, ACRL produced a final report based on the results, comparing LMU students' performance to that of students at peer institutions and to national data. Each student also received personalized post-test recommendations on how to improve their information literacy knowledge and dispositions.

## Demographic Breakdown of Students Taking TATIL

WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL/COLLEGE?
College of Business 24
College of Communication & Fine Arts 12
School of Education 1
School of Film & Television 23
College of Liberal Arts 31
College of Science & Engineering 10

WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY?
American Indian or Alaska Native 1
Asian 14
Black or African American 12
Hispanic or Latino 18
Multi-Race (Two or More Races) 12
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific
Islander 0
U.S. Nonresident 0
White 43
Race and Ethnicity Unknown 0
Other 1

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER IDENTITY?
Male 36
Female 57
Non-binary/ third gender 8
Transgender 0
Other 0

**Knowledge Results**

The average score for LMU students fell in the "college ready" category, meaning that they can use the library's tools independently to find information for typical college writing assignments. They are able to increase the precision of their results by adding keywords. They are able to organize their keywords using concepts such as Boolean operators. They are able to analyze item records to inform revisions to their searches, including identifying subject terms. They are able to recognize when a search is not working and are aware of at least one other search tool that they can try. College ready students can successfully conduct basic searches and adjust their keywords or choose a different search tool to improve their results.

In terms of their ability to plan, conduct, evaluate, and revise searches to achieve relevant results (Outcome 2.1)

- Compared to all students taking the test across peer institutions, our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed higher.

- Compared to seniors across peer institutions, only our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed the same.

- The only performance indicator where LMU students' overall performance was lower than peer institutions was when given a topic, being able to identify terms and concepts to use in a search for basic background information.

- Looking at internal demographic differences among LMU students:
  - Transfer students performed lower on this outcome
  - First-gen students performed lower on this outcome

In terms of their ability to compare and contrast a range of search tools (Outcome 2.2)

- Compared to all students taking the test across peer institutions, our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed higher.

- Compared to seniors across peer institutions, only our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed higher.

- Looking at internal demographic differences among LMU students:
  - First-gen students performed lower on this outcome
  - Students who did not take a First Year Seminar (FFYS 1000) course at LMU performed lower on this outcome

**Disposition Results**

The average score for LMU students fell in the moderately-disposed range. Scores in this range suggest that students have begun to recognize that searching is an iterative process which they should not expect will proceed without setbacks. Despite having this recognition that searching requires a willingness to explore, students who are moderately disposed to productive persistence are not likely to try unfamiliar tools and advanced strategies if they do not receive direct guidance. Instead, when they encounter difficulties, they will remix the limited set of tools and strategies they know in an effort to satisfy their information need.

- Compared to students taking the test across peer institutions, our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed higher.

- Compared to seniors across peer institutions, only our institution type, and all institutions, LMU students performed the same.

- Looking at internal demographic differences among LMU students on this disposition:
    - Transfer students performed lower.
    - Black or African American students performed lower.
    - Students who took a Rhetorical Arts course performed higher
    - Students who took a First Year Seminar course performed higher

**Recommendations**

1. Provide targeted support for transfer students and first-generation students to improve their search skills and knowledge, as these groups performed lower compared to their peers.
2. Emphasize the importance of identifying appropriate search terms and concepts when conducting background research on a topic. Incorporate exercises and examples focusing on this skill into library instruction sessions and course assignments, as LMU students performed lower in this area compared to peer institutions.
3. Encourage students to explore and use a variety of search tools and strategies by providing guided opportunities to do so in classes and library workshops. Students who are moderately disposed to productive persistence may not try unfamiliar tools and advanced strategies without direct guidance.
4. Continue to require First Year Seminar (FFYS 1000) and Rhetorical Arts courses, as students who took these courses performed higher on the disposition of productive persistence. Furthermore, Students taking a FFYS course performed higher at comparing and contrasting a range of search tools than students who did not take this course.
5. Investigate the factors contributing to lower performance among Black or African American students in the disposition of productive persistence, and develop targeted interventions and support systems to address any identified issues.