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The Heart and the Living Room: A Comparative Case Study of Two Informal Learning Spaces

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THE HEART AND THE LIVING ROOM

: LOOKING AT TWO LEARNING SITES ON CAMPUS TO FORM FUTURE SOLUTIONS

FACULTY

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DR. MIYOUNG HONG — Principal Investigator

STUDENTS

TARA GREBE — Research Assistant
MIKINNA MCGEER — Research Assistant
TIFFANY SCHWEER — Research Assistant

OVERVIEW

GOALS

- APPLY **POST OCCUPANCY** EVALUATION TECHNIQUES
- UNDERSTAND **INFORMAL** LEARNING SPACES
- ANALYZE **USE** OF AREAS
- USE RESULTS FOR **FUTURE SPACE DESIGN**

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As universities begin to renovate their exisiting study spaces, they are faced with designing an area for the maximum benefit of their students. Recent trends within study spaces have shown a departure from traditional learning set ups, and instead a push towards informal and open design. Our study analyzes a multitude of spaces, including both traditional and informal zones. We intended to find which spaces are successful and what design aspects students found the most or least helpful in their work. We aimed to find a large body of data in order to guide and support our findings and further analysis.

USERS

- TASK-ORIENTED USER
- RESOURCE-ORIENTED USER
- FOCUSED WORKER
- THE SOCIALIZER
- THE SLEEP DEPRIVED

UNION ZONES

- ZONE 1: REC ROOM
- ZONE 2: NORTH LOUNGE
- ZONE 3: WEST WING
- ZONE 4: THE CRIB

LOVE LIBRARY ZONES

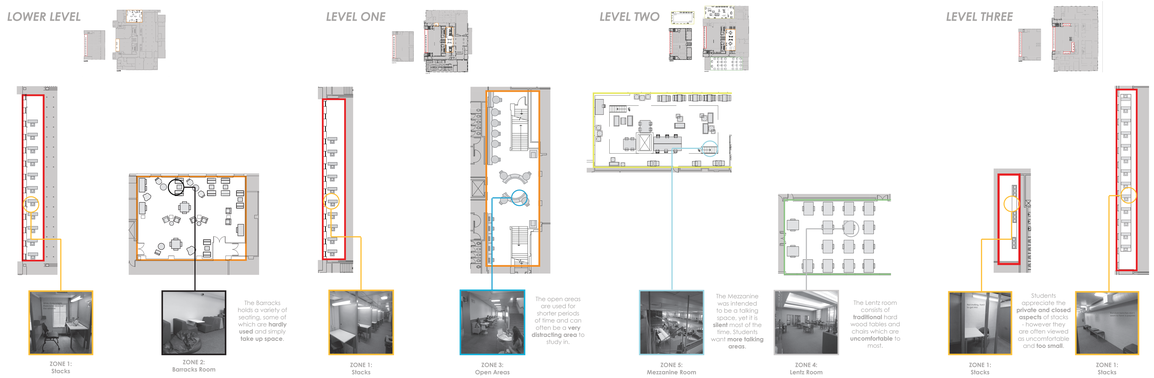
- ZONE 1: THE STACKS
- ZONE 2: BARRACKS ROOM
- ZONE 3: OPEN AREAS
- ZONE 4: LENTZ ROOM
- ZONE 5: MEZZANINE ROOM

RESEARCH METHODS

AUGUST 2018

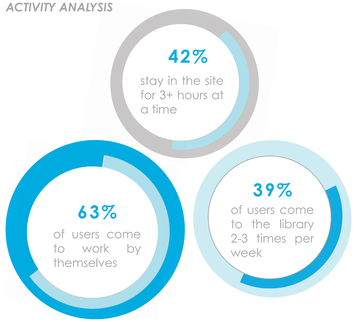
1. **literature review** — wrote **9** annotated bibliographies and a summary, discovering gaps in current research.
2. **photo essay** — created a photo essay identifying **current problems** observed on tour of site.
3. **user personas** — observed users through tour to create study of **different learner types** that use the space.
4. **unobtrusive observations** — **73** observations in library; observations in union **60**
5. **survey collection** — survey participants in library **N=173**; survey participants in library **N=120**
6. **focus groups** — invited survey participants to **1** session for each site to discuss in **further detail**
6. **preliminary analysis** — collected data and research into preliminary **findings**, beginning to analyze the information.
7. **conference application** — applied to present at the **National Conference of Undergraduate Research**

LIBRARY BUILDING LAYOUT



DATA ANALYSIS

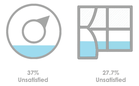
ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

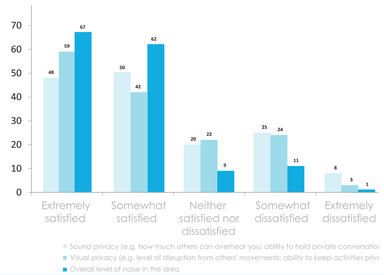


- MOST USERS ARE COMING **ALONE** TO THE LIBRARY
- THE LIBRARY IS A **QUIET SPACE**, NOT INTENDED FOR GROUP WORK AND IT IS BEING USED THAT WAY
- STUDENTS SPEND **MULTIPLE HOURS** IN THIS SITE

SATISFACTION ANALYSIS

- THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS ARE **MOSTLY SATISFIED** WITH THEIR VISUAL AND SOUND PRIVACY, AS WELL AS THE **OVERALL NOISE** IN THE AREA (SHOWN IN THE GRAPH BELOW)
- THE **HIGHEST LEVELS OF DISSATISFACTION** WERE CAUSED BY LIGHTING AND TEMPERATURE. STUDENTS WANT THE **ABILITY TO CONTROL** THESE ASPECTS





DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

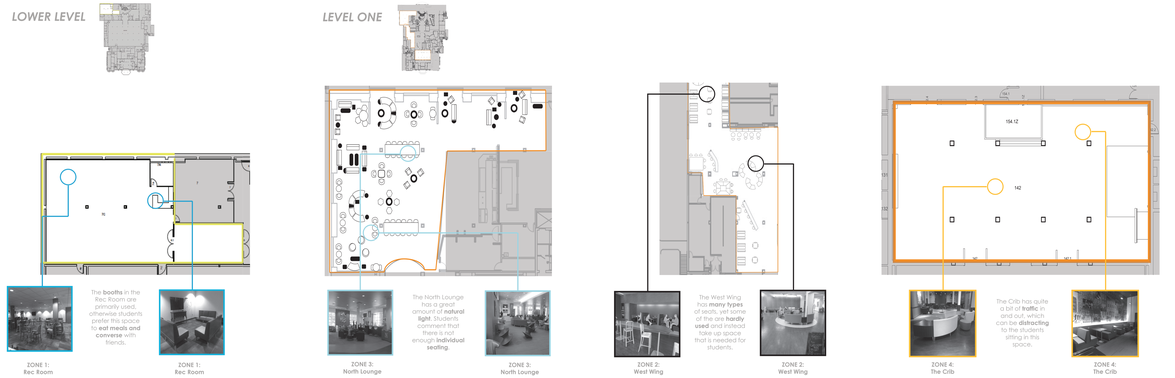
SHORT -TERM

- ***SPACE*** **:** Bring in tables that have **more space** for students to **spread out** their things.
- ***OUTLETS*** **:** Create **more outlets** within the space without having the **tripping hazard** of cords.
- ***COMFORT*** **:** Provide more **comfortable and ergonomically designed** chairs.
- ***ENVIRONMENT*** **: Label spaces** for students to know whether it is a **talking or quiet** area.

LONG -TERM

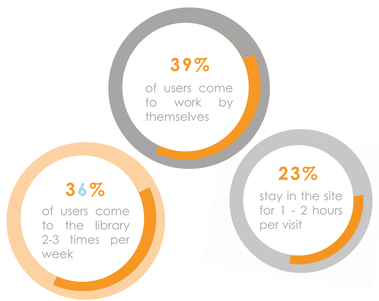
- ***ENVIRONMENT*** **:** Design and zone spaces to be **'quiet' or 'talking'** specifically.
- ***LIGHTING*** **:** Improve **lighting** in the space, both natural and artificial, **adjustable** by students.
- ***OUTLETS*** **:** Increase the **amount of outlets** throughout the area, as well as **versatile kinds.**
- ***SAFETY*** **:** Redesign the stacks to feel **more open and safe** for all users.

UNION BUILDING LAYOUT



DATA ANALYSIS

ACTIVITY ANALYSIS



- THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF **COLLABORATION** TAKING PLACE IN THE UNION
- THE UNION IS INTENDED TO BE AN **OPEN AND TALKATIVE** SPACE

SATISFACTION ANALYSIS

- THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS ARE **MOSTLY SATISFIED** WITH THEIR VISUAL AND SOUND PRIVACY, AS WELL AS THE **OVERALL NOISE** IN THE AREA (SHOWN IN THE GRAPH BELOW)
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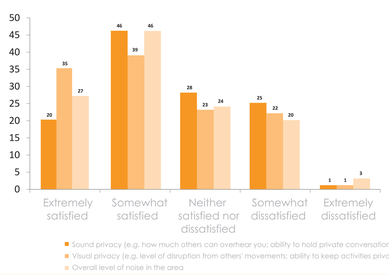


DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT -TERM

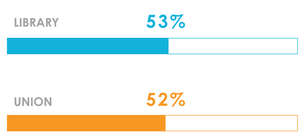
- ***SPECIFIC SEATING*** **:** Implement **more booth seating**, as well as a **variety of sizes** would be a success in this space.
- ***INDIVIDUAL SEATING*** **:** Purchase **more possibilities** for individual seating alongside more tables.
- ***MIXED USE*** **: Utilize** The Crib to hold events or provide **recreational activities** for students during night hours.
- ***TABLES*** **:** Implement **better suited tables** for student work throughout the space.

LONG -TERM

- ***CLEANLINESS*** **: Apply a better system** for keeping the environment **clean**, especially during peak hours.
- ***INDIVIDUAL SEATING*** **:** Break up the current modular seating to **form more single seats.**
- ***NOISE*** **:** Students consistently stated that they **appreciated** the **'white noise'** it provided for their work.
- ***UNNECESSARY SEATING*** **: Remove** unused furniture and **replace** them with better alternatives.

COMPARISONS

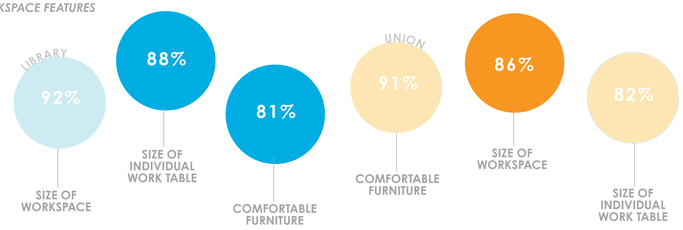
NEED ANALYSIS



THE LIBRARY AND UNION HAVE **SIMILAR NEEDS** WITHIN THE SPACE, MOST STUDENTS FOCUSED ON **ACCOMPLISHING WORK.**

HOWEVER, WHILE THE LIBRARY PRIORITIZES THE **SIZE OF THEIR WORKSPACE**, THE UNION PLACES **COMFORTABLE FURNITURE** AS THE MOST IMPORTANTWORKSPACE FEATURE.

WORKSPACE FEATURES



AMBIENCE

LIBRARY

1. QUIET
2. NOISE PRIVACY
3. VISUAL PRIVACY

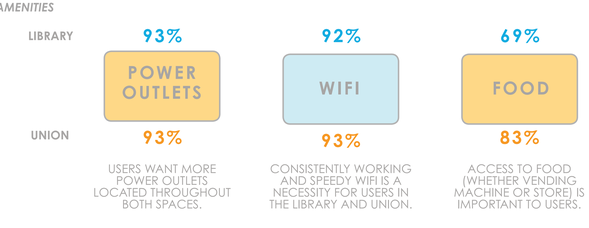
UNION

1. NOISE PRIVACY
2. BEING AROUND OTHERS WHEN STUDYING
3. VIEWS TO OUTSIDE

WHEN CONSIDERING THE ENVIRONMENT, THE LIBRARY PREFERS **QUIET AND NOISE PRIVACY.** A SPACE FREE OF DISTRACTIONS IS IMPORTANT TO THESE USERS.

THE UNION ALSO PRIORITIZES NOISE PRIVACY, AS WELL AS **BEING AROUND OTHERS WHILE STUDYING.** IT IS A MORE SOCIAL PLACE, WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO USERS.

AMENITIES



USERS WANT MORE POWER OUTLETS LOCATED THROUGHOUT BOTH SPACES.

CONSISTENTLY WORKING AND SPEEDY WIFI IS A NECESSITY FOR USERS IN THE LIBRARY AND UNION.

ACCESS TO FOOD (WHETHER VENDING MACHINE OR STORE) IS IMPORTANT TO USERS.

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