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Sustaining the Vision: Best Practices for Design, Implementation and Service

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Overview

- Planning – Investigation, Participation, Articulation
- Space Planning
  - Envisioning new spaces
  - Lessons learned / Best practices
- Working in New Spaces
  - Collaborations
  - Staff
  - Service
- Sustaining the Vision
  - Marketing
  - Assessing impact
  - Next steps

Planning

- Realization
- Action
- Investigation
- Participation

Realize the need for change

- Realization prompts planning
- Paradigm shift in libraries
- Programmatic shift in library program
  - Focus on services, not collections
  - Services are outcome-driven
- Environmental Impact --
  - Digital generation
  - Collaborative learning
- User satisfaction surveys
- Facilities not aligned with user needs

Be Pro-Active

- Get out of your silo and on the radar screen
- Become involved in campus initiatives
- Participate in university strategic planning
- Continually "sell" the library's program to administration and development office
- Form strategic alliances with potential campus partners
- Recognize and seize opportunities that come your way

Investigate

- What do your users want/need? Ask.
- What are others doing? (visit other libraries, conferences, literature)
- Gather evidence for self-discovery and needs assessment (Focus groups, LibQual)
- If possible, seek outside advice (Informed colleagues, consultants)
- Form a task force for your project
- Begin to focus and determine your project scope and vision

Gather staff buy-in and build momentum

- Inclusiveness is essential
- Share what you know – be open
- Seek input from staff in the decision making process
- Retreats & consultants when necessary
- Formalize through library strategic planning
- Keep vision alive through constant communication – formal & informal
- Educate/train staff as needed.

Lay the campus groundwork

- Align your project vision with the University's vision and core values

- Create a preliminary project concept

- Share your plan across campus constituencies (Beagle calls this "managing the campus conversation")

- Identify campus partners and get them excited about your project

- Work with development to identify funding sources

- Encourage architectural needs assessment or feasibility studies

Architectural Input at RWU

- Came from the top – gave the project credibility
- Forced a needs assessment
- Brought various campus constituencies together
- Gave us key facilities data
- Presented us with six different plans for re-envisioning our space
- Helped to sustain and build momentum for the project

Best Practices for Planning

- Know your users and assess their needs
- Lay the groundwork for administrative support
- Know what you want to achieve – have a guiding document
- Get out of your building and engage the campus community in your vision
- Be inclusive - work to achieve buy-in through retreats, meetings, consultants…

Best Practices for Planning (cont.)

- Identify key campus partners & stakeholders
- Involve staff in the decision making process
- Stay focused on your vision, but be flexible enough to envision other possibilities
- Get outside help as needed
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

Space Planning

- Begin by asking the right questions
- What do you want to happen in this space?
- What types of activities will users be engaged in?
- What services will be needed to support activities?
- How will this space enrich the educational experience?
- What spaces/services can we live without that currently exist?

What do students want?

- Social space/quiet space
- Surfaces for their stuff
- Technology everywhere
- Collaborative group work space
- Access to experts
- Comfortable environments so they don't have to leave the building (e.g. food and drink)

Reading/Study/Gathering Area

Bridgewater State College

Quiet study Simmons College

Multimedia Centers

Technology Everywhere

Group study rooms

Collaborative Work Area

Mount Holyoke

Collaborative work area
Connecticut College

Café with technology
Appalachian State

How will users find their way?

- How will traffic flow throughout the library be affected
- Line of sight
- Placement of furniture
- Carpet patterns
- Color
- Signage
- Lighting

Line of sight Plymouth State

Way-finding with color & carpet
Bridgewater State College

User support

- How will you support users in this new space?
- Let service model drive space planning
- Will you be working with campus partners?
- Integrated service desks?
- Additional staff?

Service Desks UNC - Charlotte

Envision – then Re-envision

- Take what you can get and do what you can
- Space is transitional – it changes with user needs
- How can space be reconfigured as future needs dictate
- Realize that there is no "perfect plan"
- Continually assess what works and what doesn't work
- Plan for plenty of power, data, and lighting so that you can remain flexible

RWU data & power

Wireless stations
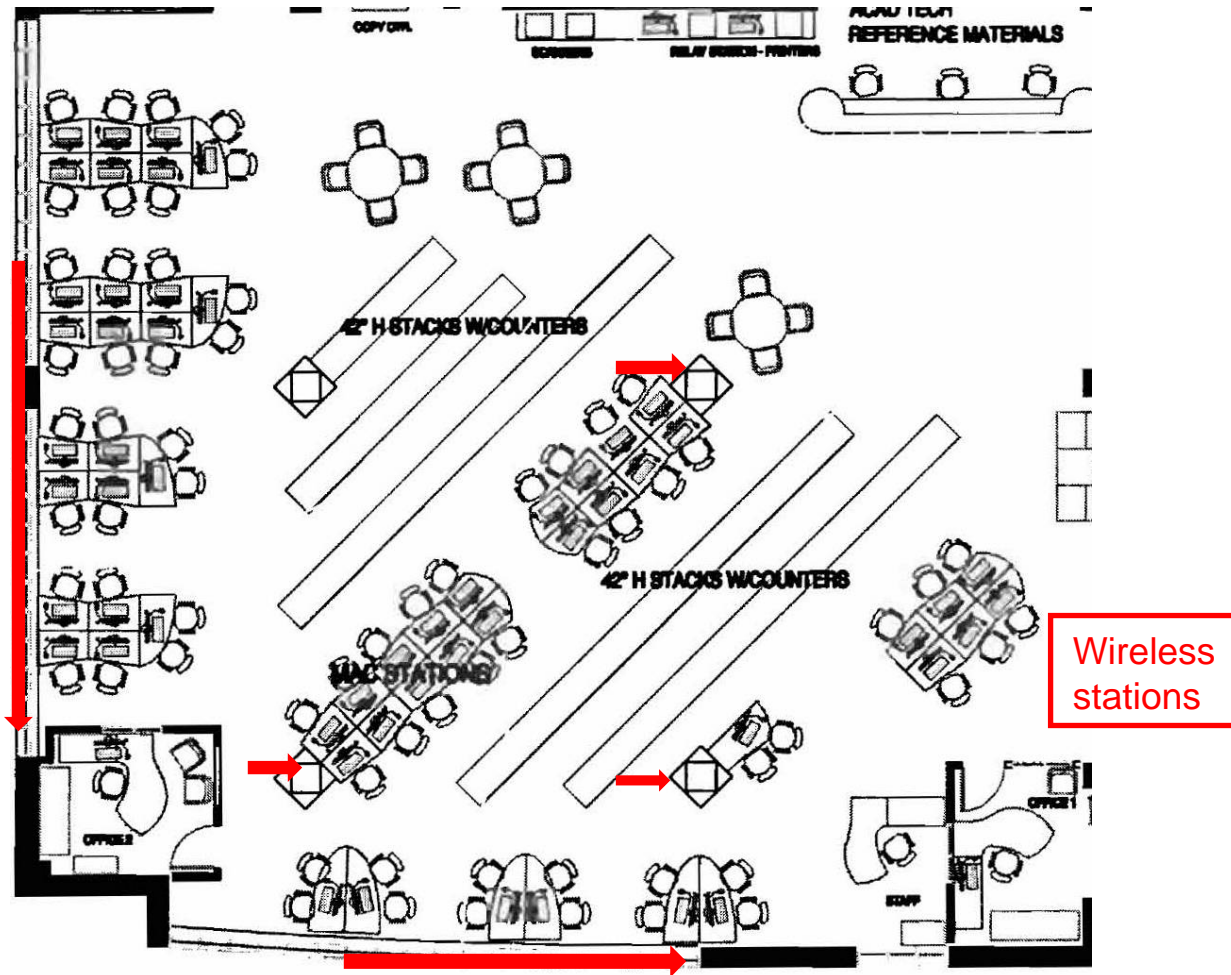
Flexible furniture

Beautiful but not flexible

Architects, Contractors, Facilities

- Ask to be included in architect and contractor meetings – good ones will ask for your input
- Be on your toes and be informed
- Know where you are in line of authority and what avenues of communication exist
- Be involved and on site as much as possible while contractors are working

Best Practices for Space Planning

- Don't rush your implementation. Take time to ask the right questions
- Think about what your users will be doing in this space and what will draw them into it
- Engage in scenario building
- Phase your project if necessary
- Pay attention to way finding and navigation
- Stay flexible – envision & re-envision

Best Practices Space Planning

- In designing service desks, get feedback from all people working who will work there

- Think about line of sight – especially between service points

- Use flexible furniture

- Consider noise levels

- Never enough power, light, and data

- No perfect plan – anticipate need for change

Old space

New Space

Working in New Spaces

- Collaboration
- Staff
- Service

Create a Culture of Service & Collaboration

- Network/listen/learn
- Regularly scheduled meetings with service providers leads to mutual understanding and respect
- Build Teamwork – retreats, staff appreciation days, etc.
- Mutual understanding of organizational goals

Challenges for Staff Collaboration

- Each department has its own organizational culture
- Different leadership & working relationships
- Different working styles
- Who shapes this new "culture"?
- Who owns the space – the Library – I.T. – Academic Support?

Ways to Facilitate Collaboration

- COMMUNICATE
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Be clear in expectations
  - What the Library expects from IT
  - What IT expects from the Library
- Protocol for conflict resolution
- Cross-training & Staff Development

Successful Collaborations

- Stay focused on what is best for the user
- Offer a variety of perspectives for improving service
- Resolve problems more quickly
- Remove organizational barriers
- Open new avenues for achieving goals

Best Practices for Working in New Spaces

- Think about how new spaces will change the Library's program of service.

- Inclusiveness and communication is essential – involve EVERYONE

- Allow time and space for staff to transition.

- Staff anxiety over new spaces will dissipate as they work together

- Memorandums of understanding/ protocol for conflict resolution

Best Practices for Working in New Spaces (cont.)

- Be flexible and continue to evolve. Change will occur, go with it and see where it leads you
- The popularity of your new space may increases staffing demand.
- Market your progress to the community.
- Continually assess how new spaces are working for both staff and users

Sustaining the Vision

- Phase the project to create reasonable expectations

- Build on past successes for future phases

- Work with Development Office to procure funding for next phase

- Market your progress to the community

- Provide teasers of what is to come

- Assess impact of changes

Marketing the New Space

- Provide tours to departments and community groups
- Give interviews to campus news media
- Change library website to reflect new space/services
- Publish articles in campus publications and digital repositories
- Provide receptions in the new space
- Create a brand for the new space and attach to freebies (bookmarks, coffee mugs, keychains)

Assessing the Impact

- Consider both qualitative and quantitative assessment (e.g. focus groups, surveys, interviews)

- Create institutional narratives to enhance intimacy with users

- Assess in tandem with the library's Strategic Plan

- Tailor to your library and user group

- Focus on value added

- Pilot assessment tools with student workers

- Base all future decision making on what is

Next Steps

- Use assessment results to fully plan next phases
- Get necessary training to interpret the data
- Leverage the administration with appropriate metrics
- Seek creative funding solutions
- Tie all results into student learning outcomes

References

- Beagle, Donald. "Conceptualizing an Information Commons." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 25, no. 2 (03, 1999): 82.

- Beagle, Donald Robert and Donald Russell Bailey, eds. *The Information Commons Handbook*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2006.

- Bennett, Scott. "Designing for Uncertainty: Three Approaches." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33, no. 2 (03, 2007): 165-179.

- ———. "First Questions for Designing Higher Education Learning Spaces." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33, no. 1 (01, 2007): 14-26.

A full list of readings can be found at
http://faculty.rwu.edu/smcmullen/Bibliography.htm

More Information

- Sabbatical study site:

  http://faculty.rwu.edu/smcmullen