

Information Commons possibilities

In order to gain more insight into the information needs of the Indiana University Kokomo, the library and IT staffs conducted surveys for faculty and students. The results of these surveys consistently point to several themes. These include:

1. Traditional library services are doing fine.
2. The need for additional computers. Students also requested that the net space allocated to each computer be increased to accommodate books, paper writing space, etc.
3. Need for more group studies or places where groups can work together.
4. Need for some, if not all, of the Learning Enhancement Center's services within library.
5. Need for quiet – Besides the need for additional computers, the noise issue received the most number of comments. Careful consideration of creating space that limit noise pollution must occur. It is time to consider creating a wall and doorway between the Kelly Center and the library. While the open concept is nice, it is clear that noise from outside the library carries through the building, especially up to the second floor through the stairwell. The creation of a wall with a closed doorway will help minimize this noise problem.
6. Coffee bar – The coffee bar has been implemented but expansion on the original idea may is needed.
7. More comfortable furniture – easy chairs, couches, etc.
8. TV's with news, public service notices announcement, etc

From the information gathered from these surveys along with conversations with several different offices on campus, a plan has emerged to expand the Information Commons into a Learning Commons. The plan calls for an expansion of the Information Commons itself and the expansion and addition of several services currently available on campus to achieve the Learning Commons. This expansion, which will require a small amount of renovation of the facility, can occur in four distinct phases.

Phase 1. Creation of Information Commons and Help Desk within Library.
(Already Completed)

Phase 2. Expand current Information Commons in terms of number of computers and net usable space. At the least, the computers relocated from the Main Computer lab should be reconfigured onto tables that allow greater room for users. Renovate the Instruction Room to house a second smart classroom that could multitask as a computer lab and assist CTE if they are included in the plan. Renovate the current Computer Assistance Room (CARS) to be a better smart classroom.

New computers required:

Instruction Room – 22-25

Floor area in Information Commons – 10-20. It is hard to estimate this number. The increase of computers in a second lab will assuage the computer shortage; however, an increase in the use of the labs for instructions will tie the labs up.

We should look to increase the number of scanners. We currently have one. We should probably have at least 5.

At some point in the future, we may want to think of increasing the library's laptop pool rather than increasing the number of desktop computers. The use of laptops, in a robust wireless environment, would allow students the ability to sit down anywhere and would negate the need for specialized furniture, especially on the second floor. The laptops could also act as a "floating classroom" that could be set up anywhere in the library. Costs will probably prohibit this in the near future.

Other possibilities include renovating library and IT office spaces. This would include the creation of a new Information Desk, incorporating both Reference and IT Help, centrally located on the floor near the Information Commons and Reference Area. With this move, we could renovate the current Reference/Help Desk area to increase the number of offices for the library and HelpDesk staff. We may wish to consider relocating the library administrative office to the main floor making the current space available for other possibilities.

In addition, we should consider the possibility of incorporating the Center for Teaching Excellence and Assessment into the library. Their needs include:

- a. Three offices (either create on main floor along windows or in current Audio-Visual Dept. – relocate these folk? Possibly vacated CTE space.)
- b. Kitchen facilities (Library kitchen could work – especially if CTE is next door.)
- c. Computer lab for training (CARS or renovated LI room will suffice.)
- d. Meeting space for 15-20 people. (Archives Room or library conference/kitchen area could work if more space efficient furniture replaces the current furniture.)
- e. Laptop computers – integrate with library reserve laptops.
- f. Specialized production room; sound-proof room (rework media room.)

One of the more serious concerns that have risen since the creation of the Information Commons is the increase of noise in the library. As we plan for the future, we must take into consideration setups that will minimize noise pollution. One way to help alleviate

the noise problem within library would be to place group workstations inside a room. Utilizing glass partitions can accomplish this effect. Students are currently going first to the group studies for their group work. Individual workstations can remain on the floor on workstations that afford greater workspace. That is an element for the architects or designers to figure out.

There is a need for space that faculty and upper division/honors students can have designated for use in the library. Creation of such space is not a major concern at this time. However, the institution can purchase, or make, small locked cabinets that can be placed under carrels. Faculty or upper class students can request these cabinets for storage areas thereby creating an inexpensive "special space" without major construction.

These changes would also include adding seating that is more comfortable; possibly expanding the coffee bar; and, adding more TV driven information sources.

Phase 3. -- Expand number of computers and add additional outside departments

1. Language Lab.

This service is very specialized. Needs computer lab facility dedicated to its function and as such cannot multitask with existing CARS and LI room. Software for language students can be loaded into specific computers in library in places where students talking into a microphone will not disturb other students. Group studies may be possible places for this service. It might be best to locate this facility elsewhere or look to using basement level.

2. Learning Enhancement Center.

Survey clearly shows need for some, if not all LEC functions to be housed within library. Again, we may have to look towards utilizing the basement for this space.

3. Curriculum Library.

Not addressed in survey or study, however future consideration should be given to incorporating into main library to streamline efficiencies and costs.

4. Welcome Center.

Does this function become redundant, or can we incorporate it into newer structure to achieve greater efficiencies?

The following projects can free up space to accommodate some of these changes.

1. Move National Union Catalog and all periodical indexes replicated in electronic format to another area. Possibly basement.
2. Judiciously weed monograph collection to create more study space or CTE space on second floor.
3. Move new book and McNaughton book collection to main entranceway. The primary reason for this move is to bring high trafficked items to the entranceway to entice patrons into the library.
4. Weed and/or move government document collection replicated electronically to basement.
5. Purchase JSTOR electronic journal back issue collection and weed/move microform collection to basement.
6. Move Reference/Helpdesk to more centralized location on main floor. This will free up some space near librarians' office.
7. Disperse media viewing equipment throughout building, put in-group studies, place on moveable carts that can be used anywhere, or move to basement area.
8. Rework group studies and/or media viewing area for offices. CTE, LEC, etc.