Bulging at the Seams: Staff Challenges with a Successful Commons

Joe Fennewald
Head Tombros McWhirter Knowledge Commons
Penn State University Libraries

7th Annual Canadian Learning Commons Conference
Vision 20/20 – Shifting Lenses: The Learning Commons for Today and Tomorrow
June 9, 2014
Canadian Learning Commons Conference

Student Service Providers and Codependency: Training Our Staff and Ourselves Not to Rescue
Karin Winnard, Bryant University (CLCC-2)

Learning Commons 2.0: The Next Step in Collaboration? Idea Swap (CLCC – 2)

Building Bridges: Collaborations at the Heart of the Learning Commons Lesley Beckett Balcom,
Univ. of New Brunswick, and Elaine Fairey, Simon Fraser U. (CLCC – 3)

Recipe for Success: ITS/Library Collaboration in the Learning Commons Janice El-Bayoumi and
Edward Hayden, Harriet Irving Library (CLCC – 3)

Roundtable Session Title: Working with Student Staff in Your Learning Commons Nathalie Soini,
Queen’s University, and Julie Mitchell, UBC (CLCC – 4)

Student Involvement for Student Success: Student Staff in the Learning Commons Nathalie Soini
and Julie Mitchell, Queen’s Univ (CLCC – 6)

Negotiating Meaning, Negotiating Place: Peer Mentoring and Student Participation in the
Learning Commons Keith Kirkwood, Victoria University, Australia (CLCC – 6)

In training: Effective Student Staffing and Collaboration Sandra Mills, Memorial University of
Newfoundland (CLCC – 6)
There are as many models as institutions . . . every college and university develops the learning commons model that reflects its particular history, culture, hopes and dreams.

Elaine Fairey and Kathy Musial, Grassroots Development of a Learning Commons at British Columbia Institute of Technology (CLCC – 2)

There are quite possibly as many definitions of ‘Information Commons’ as there are potential staffing models.

Key Questions:

- How many service points?
- How will existing staff adjust to the new space?
- How do we maintain a strong library presence?
Tombros McWhirter Knowledge Commons
Penn State University Libraries

54,000 square feet
$11,360,000 total estimated cost
Open 24 / 5
Snacks & drinks allowed
Storage lockers
Laptop recharging units
Scanners
Group Study Rooms
Media Production Spaces
Practice Presentations
Classroom
Background Story

- Retirement of eels in hall has led to an abnormal
- Characters have been recruited to defend the tower of glass.
MEDIA COMMONS

Production Rooms

One Button Studio
Writing tutors
(10 pm – Midnight, Sun. – Thurs.)

255 Contacts
Fall 2010

210 Contacts
Fall 2013
Media Commons Knowledge Commons

4,724 Contacts
Fall 2013

Media Commons
Pattee 2nd Floor

375 Contacts
Fall 2010

Multimedia Specialists
IT Service Desk Consultants
“Green Team”
Resolve problems with personal devices

IT Service Desk
Knowledge Commons

6,365 Contacts
Fall 2013

IT Service Desk
Willard

4,050 Contacts
Fall 2010
Tech tutors
“Purple Team”
Software Support

207 Contacts
Fall 2013
ITS Lab Consultants

“Blue Team”
Resolve problems with lab computers, printers or scanners

3,517 Contacts
Fall 2013
SERVICES
15,203 total contacts,
Fall 2013

6,365 contacts

4,724 contacts

210 contacts

207 contacts

3,517 contacts
“ASK AN EXPERT” — Library support
9,834 reservations
35,495 estimated attendance

Nov. 5 – Dec. 21, 2013
611 groups (1,200+ students)
turned away
SERVICES
25,608 Total Number of Questions Asked at Reference Desks
Fall 2013
SERVICES
5,089 Reference Questions
Fall 2013
SERVICES
ASK A Librarian = 5,212 chat & email questions
SERVICES
22,700 total contacts, Fall 2013

- 7,677 contacts
- 4,724 contacts
- 6,365 contacts
- 207 contacts
- 210 contacts
- 3,517 contacts
KNOWLEDGE COMMONS OPERATIONS

10:00 AM Sunday – Midnight Friday
10:00 AM – Midnight Saturday

• 101 LIBRARY STAFF
• 107 ITS LAB CONSULTANTS (“Blue Team”)
• 31 ITS SERVICE DESK CONSULTANTS (“Green Team”)
• 16 TECH TUTORS (“Purple Team”)
• 5 MEDIA COMMONS SPECIALISTS
• 3 WRITING TUTORS
Head Knowledge Commons
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