Assessment Comes Full Circle for Rebuilding K-State’s Hale Library

Laurel Littrell
Kansas State University
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What would you do, as an assessment librarian, if in one afternoon your entire main library closed for more than a year?

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Before the May 22, 2018 fire:

• Planning a 1st floor renovation for a new learning commons
• Gate counts and perception of crowding
• Complaints about finding seats for quiet study and group study
• Ongoing Assessment Efforts
  • Annual university wide Senior Survey including a question about usage and satisfaction with library spaces
  • LibQUAL February 2018
  • Focus groups with students regarding space preferences
Students’ ideas for improvement

• Quiet individual study space
• Group study space with privacy and technology
• More outlets!
• More whiteboards!
• Flexible furniture and layouts
• Desire for a blend of traditional and modern settings
• Comfortable seating
• Table space for laptops, books, papers, etc.
Then this happened....
Suddenly our renovation project grew in scope!

- Now five floors + basement, 550,000 square feet
- All collections removed for water and smoke cleaning and repair
- Technology destroyed including devices, wiring, networks
- University data center heavily damaged
- All HVAC destroyed
- All electrical systems destroyed
- Most walls, floors and ceilings destroyed
- Nearly all furniture unsalvageable
- Two small branch libraries couldn’t compensate for capacity needs
A very important side note:

- Nobody was injured or killed despite the fire happening on a Monday afternoon.
- Nearly all the collections were saved; loss of only a few thousand items out of 1.5 million items in the building.
- Please have a comprehensive disaster plan at the ready!
Next Steps

• Build upon body of assessment data gathered to date
• Post Fire Assessment Project
  • Surveys and focus groups tailored to user groups
  • See for these results: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GnhpQWPMezMVkdGQu12pPBD_yTgUCqQV/view
• 1st floor planned renovation took place, opening August 2019
  • 15 months after the fire
• Responses to renovation informed layout and furniture decisions for other floors
SUMA: North Carolina State University

• Toolkit for collecting, managing, and analyzing data about the usage of physical spaces
• Open source, mobile tool
• https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/projects/suma
• Our implementation focused on study rooms and seating areas with certain types of furniture
• Density of seating
• Preferred types of furniture
• Architects used information to inform seating and furniture selections on other floors
Outlined area (first floor) is what opened August 2019 and assessed with SUMA
Overall Occupancy Rates from Aug. 28-Sept. 23, 2019

- 396 Seat Capacity
  - 42% Occupancy at 11:00 a.m. M-F (peak)
  - 18% Occupancy at 8:00 p.m. Sun-Th (night)
- Occupancy was also taken at 2:00 a.m. and weekends—too low to determine preferences

- Occupancy of 40% seems full*
- Occupancy of 20% is a good target*
- Occupancy of 10% or less needs evaluation*

Comparison of Capacity, Peak Average Use, and Low Average Use

Small capacity areas are collaboration rooms
Considerations for Increasing Density Comfortably

• Data collected during non-peak usage is most valuable
  • Indicates preferences because there are choices

• Most Density Realized
  • "Zigzag" carrels
  • Smaller tables
  • Movable “roller chairs” with large swing arms

• Least Density Realized
  • Larger tables
  • Soft seating (sofas, soft chairs)
  • Padded bench seats

• Collaboration Rooms used constantly but below capacity
  • Reservation system helps with efficiency
Implications and Value

• Value was demonstrated, although with heartbreaking consequences with loss of access to collections and study space

• Donors inspired to assist—with donations and insurance funds could rebuild the library to new standards

• Space utilization studies are most efficient during non peak usage

• Variety of seating configurations are important
  • Relaxation or quick email between classes
  • Serious, long time study
  • Efficient usage of space and furniture
Then this happened....

**COVID-19 UPDATES**

*The university's priority throughout this evolving situation will always be to protect the health and safety of everyone at K-State and in our communities.*

**Highlights:**

- K-State has canceled fall commencement activities.
- Provost Taber has announced adjustments to the spring 2021 academic calendar.
- K-State has launched an online dashboard to track COVID-19 data.
- The university is expanding its COVID-19 testing capacity.
- Find the latest Guidance and FAQ for returning to K-State campuses.
COVID Pandemic Response

• Many students—no library, to big library—very few students
• On the day the campus shut down (March 16, 2020), we had planned to open the 2nd floor
• On campus students needed quality study space and Wi-Fi
• Rapid switching to working at home remotely was familiar to us
• We were able to provide unusually well prepared support to the university community through the crisis
  • Online course support
  • Online collections support
  • Interlibrary loan and delivery of physical materials
• We were well versed in disaster management
Future Hopes

• Remainder of Hale Library is opening January 25, 2021
• Collections are moving in and will be available sometime Spring 2021—nearly three years after the fire
• Suma will continue to be used to assess the building and determine post occupancy changes as needed
How assessment data brought us full circle

- Recent and fresh assessment data about our spaces helped us develop a plan quickly
- Data helped inform our work with curating library collections
- Data helped us restore needed services quickly when displaced from the building
- Data helped us manage the COVID crisis and support our university community
Sources


• Suma: A tablet-based toolkit for collecting, managing, and analyzing data about the usage of physical spaces. https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/projects/suma
Thank you!

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