INTRODUCTION

The University of Northern Colorado (UNC), a doctoral granting institution serving around 9,500 students, is located on the Front Range of northern Colorado. University Libraries is comprised of two buildings: the James A. Michener Library and the Howard M. Skinner Music Library.

In preparation for our university’s new capital campaign, the University Libraries (UL) is working with Pfeiffer Partners to create a program design to remodel the Michener Library, which opened to students in 1971, and houses most of the libraries’ collections. While there have been numerous smaller projects to enhance the student experience, there has been no major revisioning of the building until now.

Internal (UL employees) and external (students, faculty, and staff) stakeholders were asked to contribute to the revisioning of the building.

STAFF DATA COLLECTION

Hosted during our all staff meeting in November 2021, and coordinated by the Libraries Assessment Committee Libraries personnel from both libraries participated in a variety of activities to better understand employee space needs. While people were free to comment on any aspect of the building, this session had a greater focus on workspace needs than the student portion of the process.

The four activities included using blank floor plans to design their “dream layout” for the building; commenting on photos that showed various office layouts and designs; listing their top three priorities for the building; and completing a survey to provide additional thoughts and suggestions.

RESULTS

Surveys were submitted from students in every college. Because we used a convenience sample, there were also some faculty/staff submissions, but the majority of responses came from students, both graduate and undergraduate. The SRL analyzed the survey results and provided us with an executive summary and a full analysis (bit.ly/3TznZW7).

NEXT STEPS

These findings have informed our conversations with Pfeiffer Partners. They will be using the data to help us create a welcoming, student-centered space. The final renderings will be completed in December 2022. We plan to use the architectural renderings to guide future fundraising and renovations.

STUDENT DATA COLLECTION

The Assessment Committee worked with UNC’s Social Research Lab (SRL) to develop a survey to gather student feedback on how they currently use Michener Library and how they would like to use it in the future. Using a variety of techniques, including Likert scales, ranking, hot spots, and open text, we were able to gain a better understanding of what students want from the library. The survey was promoted by advertising in the campus-coordinated student newsletter, hanging posters around campus, and posting on social media. Nearly 600 surveys were completed in spring 2022.

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ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Darren Ilett, Teaching & Outreach Librarian
- Dave White, Libraries Facilities Manager
- Wendy Highby, Scholarly Communication Librarian
- Laura Uglean Jackson, Archivist for University Archives Collections

AUTHORS

Jayne Blodgett, Interim Dean of Libraries
Natasha Floersch, Library Technician
Annie Epperson, Teaching & Outreach Librarian