

Participatory Design in Redesigning an Academic Library

Capturing Users' Work through an Artistic Lens

University of Maryland, College Park

Library Assessment Conference
Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment
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Purpose

In 2011 a library-led project team gathered user-based information for a total redesign of McKeldin Library, the central library serving the University of Maryland, College Park. In addition, graduate classes in anthropology and architecture provided other elements of user input. All of the above were provided to an Architecture Studio course to create actual designs for a reprogrammed library.

This poster focuses on data from one of the three sets of activities. In participatory design workshops library staff (21 participants), campus faculty (20), undergraduate (20) and graduate (17) students drew their ideal library workspaces. This poster presents drawings, gathered data and conclusions about stakeholders' ideal study, research and work spaces in the library.

Methodology

Research Question

What do library users and potential users perceive as their needs in a library?

Study Limitation

Participant recruitment was difficult, resulting in a non-random pool. For example, of 203 randomly selected graduate students only 2 participated; others were recruited on the spot in the Library. Recruitment of other user groups had similar potential of skewing.

Script Used

Each participant received the following directions about what they should draw: "Imagine that we could create a new space inside the library that would be exactly as you want it. Imagine that we ask you to design it and then we get a team of people to come in and build it. You walk into the space and it's perfect."

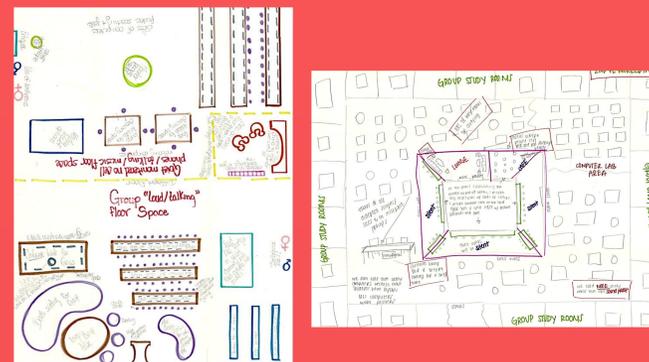
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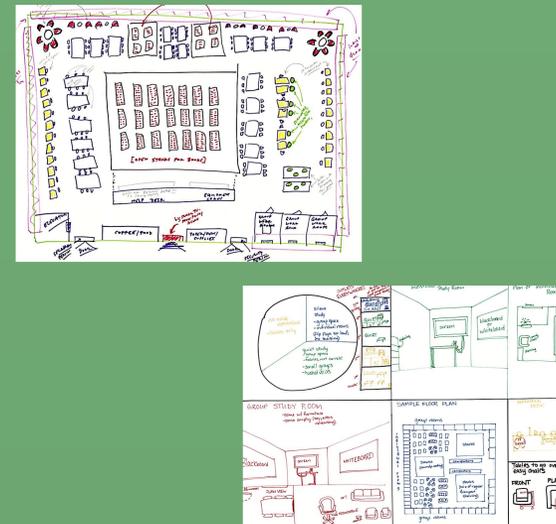


Selected Drawings

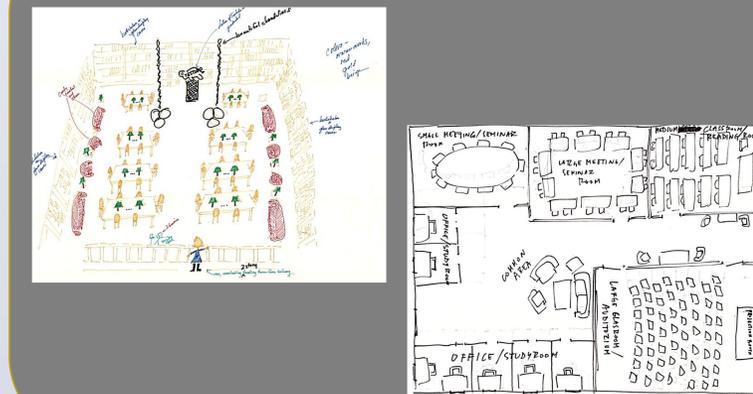
Undergraduate Artistic Visions



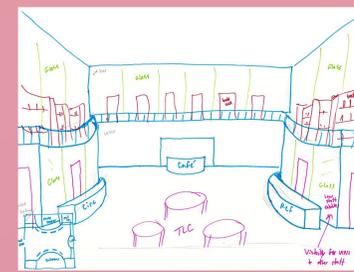
Graduate Artistic Visions



Faculty Artistic Visions



Library Staff Artistic Visions



Common Themes

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Microwaves/vending/food | Schedulable rooms |
| Personal/belongings security | Bike racks |
| Service promotion | Book drop boxes |
| Trash/general cleanliness | Space |
| Software on computers | Art |

The Future Is Here (What We Are Doing Now)

- Offer microwaves/vending/food
- Enhance personal/belongings security
- Promote services
- Reconfigure space
- Install art
- Implement room scheduling
- Install bike racks
- Enhance software on computers
- Improve general cleanliness

What Undergraduate Students Need

- Solitude and concentration AND group interaction
- Noisy AND quiet
- Equipment
- Library computers
- Areas to spread out
- Movable furniture with comfort
- Be with others, whether socializing or just being together
- Frequent shifts among courses, disciplines
- Sustained energy from rest, food, coffee, etc.
- Physical comfort, emotional security
- Sense of self, opportunities to experiment/build identity

What Graduate Students Need

- Ample light
- Solitude, intense concentration
- Noise containment
- Equipment
- Development of connection to one's discipline
- Focus: attain degree
- Inspiration from "heart of the library"
- Sustained energy from occasional rest

What Faculty Need

- Library collections
- Deep, sustained thinking, reading, writing
- Inspiration from "heart of the library"
- Connection to nature, culture
- Solitary AND collaboration/seminars
 - Being in one's own space
 - Conversation, community building
- People to assist them
- Equipment
- Occasional break, sustained energy from food/coffee

What Library Staff Need

- Light
- Ability to see across space
- Being in one's own space
- Meeting with others
- Technology
- Storage
- Instructing/training users and ourselves
- Specialized equipment
- Maintaining a sense of self