

Responses to Questions from the CIC (Big 10 Alliance Center for Library Initiatives 2016)

General:

1. Please describe the space in your library that serves primarily undergraduate students.

The Undergraduate Library is a two story underground building around a courtyard that is connected by a tunnel to the Main Library.

- The upper floor is a designated collaborative floor with various types of table configurations. That is where most of the services are (circulation, reserve, loanable technology desk) printing/scanning, media commons (including a video production studio, computer lab), gaming center, an instruction lab, the writer's workshop, our consultation corner (for reference and partner services), our New Book display, and our Student Art Gallery. Most of the librarian, AP and Staff workspaces/offices are also on that floor.
 - The lower level contains the books, media, two respite rooms (one that will shortly contain a small audio booth), two rooms being converted to self-use video studios and a professional audio booth. There is a small café table by the Media Collection area that is typically staffed by a student assistant. The Mortenson Center for International Librarianship is also on that level. There are a few hundred study carrels positioned around the walls on that floor and many tables and soft seating on that level. In the front of that level there are several computers (log ins) and our "QB" Question Board.
2. Could you please describe your service area - what services are offered, who works there, what does it look like - are there any pictures you could share? (will attach some powerpoints of the spaces)
 - After multiple iterations of service desks (separate, combined, typical reference, small reference café tables, combined at a consultation corner desk—we are ready to explore again regarding our reference services (especially since most of the questions go through our VR desk). At this point—the service desks are:
 1. Entrance – Circulation/Reserves/Loanable Technology Desks. Although the staff there handle most of the READ level 1 and 2 questions (directional and basic informational). Any READ level 3 or above questions are directed to either the UGL Consultation Corner desk in the back (for hours it is staffed) or to the Main Library Information Desk, or through the VR chat service, or by wondering back to see if a librarian or GA is available. We will be incorporating "On Call" hours in the fall.
 2. Consultation Corner—back of the library in front of the Writer's workshop. This desk is where any campus partners provide service (Career Services, Advising, Cultural Houses, Study Abroad, McKinley Health) as well as the UGL Librarians and GAs – for reference services. However, this fall we will be exploring a different combined writer's workshop/UGL joint consultations. The Writers Workshop is part of the English Department (and uses our space). They used to be just for graduate students, but now also assist undergrads and have peers working out by the consultation corner on our round tables. We have developed good working relationships with them and have offered combined office hours with reference GAs through the years and are exploring doing a combined consultation option (and sign up) with them this fall.
 3. Technology Services Computer Lab. This lab area in the back corner of the library and room 289 is controlled by campus technology services (and they just

use the UGL space). Initially, when the Media Commons was being formed—the agreement was that they would be joined with UGL staff to create a combined service point. We allowed them a huge foot print on that level, but after three years of no cooperation, we moved them back to their original footprint.

4. Media Commons Office-- The staff in the Media Commons tried providing office hours and joint hours at a Technology Desk. However, it has gotten to the point that their assistance is needed so frequently that they have now gone to an appointment set up. Until we can get adequate staffing to answer the real complex audio and video questions, this is the solution. The technology services staff are supposed to handle basic video/editing software questions, but it is pretty hit and miss. The Media Commons serves a campus need, as does our loanable technology pool. The video production studio and audio studio and our loanable technology collection are the only ones on campus available to undergraduates (unless they belong to a specialized program that might have them. Anyone affiliated with the university can check out that equipment or reserve the studios—however, the Media Commons was created specifically for the Undergraduate students for their multimedia project work.

- Is there a subgroup within undergraduates that the space wants to serve?
I believe initially it was geared for the first two years of undergrads (as far as providing introductory materials for those levels. At this point, the space is one of the most heavily used on campus for any level because of the open, collaborative environment, the coffee shop next to it, the huge options for loanable technology (and also the lower level quiet area).
- Is there a reason the space was arranged the way it is?
Most definitely. It is all based on what students want – and that continues to evolve. When I came here in 2005 my first task was to serve as a consultant to transition the two levels away from what it was and to create the “learning commons” type environment. The upper level was full of collections and outdated machinery and had very few tables. The lower level was 2/3 full of “a sea of study carrels” I spent a year doing assessments, interviews, focus groups, visiting other libraries and working to understand what the students wanted in the space. The goal was to make the upper level all collaborative space (include much more electrical options) and to create recreational type resources for undergrads. We moved out everything from the upper level (except the tables). That also meant determining the number of study carrels that could be removed downstairs to make room. It also meant reupholstering furniture, adding different table tops (and power hubs) and beginning to purchase new furniture. It took 5 years of iterative assessments and trying arrangements until we were ready to tackle the Media Commons. We went through three phases for that. We finally were able to add new flooring on the upper level. This summer we continue to make changes to the arrangement on the upper floor, adding different tables and created a Student Art Gallery. I continue to do observational studies on the floors to determine how students are using the space and do little one or two question surveys at the tables as well. David Ward also does various assessment with his GAs from time to time to help determine how students want to use the space.

3. What is the purpose/mission of the co-located desk - what is your intent?
We did away with the co-located desk (which at one point was the information/reference desk). That did not last long. We can chat more about that if you like. We tried another co-located

desk with Reference librarians and the partners at one desk up front. They did not want to keep getting reference questions. We since did away with the reference desk and currently—sit at the Consultation Corner desk—but not at the same time as any of the partners. That may change in the fall if we decide to share that desk with the writer’s workshop. The other co-located desk we tried was the Technology services desk. That was to have the media commons staff, the technology lab students and any campus edtech consultants at it. We found that the tech lab students really did not feel comfortable in that environment and frankly, their supervisor did not want to do things differently than what they had done all those years. So, after a year and a half, that desk was taken away.

4. How long has this space or service area been in operation?
 - Don’t really have it anymore. We have one “consultation corner” desk that partners, reference folks co-share (but on different times). There is plenty of space to co-share, though.

Assessment:

5. Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently? Lessons learned.

We keep changing and evolving based on what we do and what we hear from students. Just because something might not have turned out the way we initially thought it would—doesn’t mean that at some point in the future it might not work. So, we always do something different if we think it will be a positive change or improvement. Signage is one thing that we keep changing—hoping to make it effective—yet – just the other day we almost circled back to doing poles from the columns or signs on the columns that we moved away from years ago.

Even with all of the efforts of trying to do a combined tech service/media commons service—with the stakeholders involved and agreeing—it still seemed forced. However, now, the possibility of a combined writers workshop reference joint consultation (not just at office hours) might work because both groups are coming at it together – rather than one group having more ownership and desire than the other.

6. What is the most popular/used service?

Our Loanable Technology service by far. We gradually increased what we offer and with the Media Commons extended that even more into the high level cameras and equipment. The service evolved over the years and really is the only place on campus students can get this equipment. It feeds into the Media Commons usage (video and audio studios). Our 40,000 media collection is also high use.

One of our librarians also has been very successful at developing mobile apps based on student input (MINRVA). Although it is not heavily used—it has great potential.

- Why do you think this is the most successful service? -- because we offer almost anything students might need for studying/project work/ that has to do with technology/cameras/peripherals etc. Same with our media collection. We purchase almost all the dvds/blurays.
7. What kind of research did you conduct prior to implementing this model? Would you be willing to share the results? I can give some urls for several articles we wrote about loanable technology, media commons and the Mobile Apps (which include the type of research and results we got)

If a shared service space:

8. Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently? Lessons learned.

Since the previous shared models have been dissolved—it will really be the new reference/writers workshop model we will try next. We also hope to get a tutoring center launched in the next year or so and it will be in that same consultation corner space and hopefully joined in with the other services for consultation (writers workshop/reference)