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Centennial Science and Engineering Library Planning focus groups for an e-Science Mall

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Summary of CSEL Focus Groups March 9, 10, and 11, 2009

Three groups of approximately ten students each were assembled to help re-envision the southwest wing in the Centennial Science and Engineering Library (CSEL). The process used was an “affinity focus group exercise” that helps identify desired services, accommodations, furnishings, technology, etc., in renovated Library spaces. The students were both graduates and undergraduates, mostly from the science and engineering departments, but also from architecture and planning and the humanities.

Several ideas emerged. First, the students are interested in a space that brings together all the digital tools they use in their studies. They want places where they can use multimedia computers to create projects as well as rehearse presentations. They are interested in computers that have all the software they need available. This includes collaborative and flexible areas that can be configured for different groups.

Second, the current library is perceived as a “dismal” and “dated” place that needs to be made stylish and inviting. There were many ideas for new furniture, better lighting, and recreational areas that would help make it a lively destination.

Third, there were a number of ideas for hosting academic services and interdisciplinary programs in the library which serves as a central and neutral space. This included statistics clinics, thesis advisement, digitization center, software demonstrations, and more.

Finally, there is a real interest in sustainability and green issues. It seemed to make sense that a science and engineering library should be a showcase for energy efficiency and green materials in construction and furnishings.

These focus groups provided clear evidence that there is interest in using the library space in new ways and in making it a more dynamic place. The redesign should create separate spaces that enable different uses; see the attached transcripts.

CSEL Focus Group March 9, 2009

Attendants: 12 participants

Affinity Groupings

“Green Space” – Stylish flexible lounge space that is sustainable and eco-friendly

- Separated meeting room
- Some sound isolation
- More white boards with markers
- Leisure room
- Gaming zone
- Future zone
- Colorful paint
- Art
- Comfortable, movable, updated furniture
- More lights at the table level
- Flexible personal space for study

“Future Zone” – High tech area for students

- Modeling computers
- More computers
- Access to whole bunch of computer software
- Multi-media software, projects, screen, remote connections, laptops
- Software (matlab, mathematica, maple, spice, etc.)
- Nintendo/Wii
- Free printing
- Outlets
- Sound booth for podcasts
- Area for science and technology workshops
- Touch screen computers
- Digital studio that has equipment to record lectures
- Ability to record paper and thesis presentations

“Four corners” – 4 different areas with different activities (recreation corner, digital corner, study corner, and lounge corner)

Recreation Corner

Exercise equipment
Ping pong

Digital Corner

Digital recording areas
Media Center/store
Printers – free for students
Band practice recording room
CD/DVD's of lectures
Departmental software and lectures

Study Corner

Study rooms that are private and divided
Study room for projects
Meeting rooms with projectors and multimedia computers

Lounge Corner

Couches
Open furniture
Microwave and refrigerator

“Jolt, Revive, Refresh” – Activities to help students recharge

Couches
Casual places
Corner store, juice bar (not Starbucks!)
Healthy food and snacks
More water fountains, filtered water

CSEL Focus Group March 10, 2009

Attendants: 8 participants

Affinity Groupings

“Digital Education Media” – All the equipment you need for your education

- More student computer
- Large monitors
- Mac stations
- Flat screen interactive media stations
- Media studio
- Multimedia stations (audio/video)
- DVD library, television room
- Digital music library
- Anatomical model room with Adam program on a computer

“Looks and Feels” - Attractive and inviting space

- Proper utilization of space, use architect
- Reptile wall
- Fish tanks
- Plants
- Lounge room
- Medium height movable walls
- Couches
- Colors and mirrors
- Stylish
- Good lighting
- Organized on Feng Shui principles
- Ipod accessory vending machine
- Comments box
- Group study rooms
- Display of student work
- Art display cases
- Sustainable education space
- Recreation room with Wii and video games
- Drawing room
- Reception area with kitchenette
- Reconfigure carrels on outside walls

“Kinetic Konections” - Connect people to other people through educational spaces

Collapsible/mobile performance space

Sound proof recording booth

Video conferencing station

Meditation room

Tread mills, cycling machines to make you stay awake

Walking track around outside walls

Climbing wall at outside wall/window area

Small instruction group area

CSEL Focus Group March 11, 2009

Attendants: 8 participants

Affinity Groupings

“The Academic Spa” - Customizable space for students to do all the activities that help them succeed

- Academic advising station
- Thesis and dissertation advising
- Paper editing station
- Interdisciplinary displays and shop fronts
- Statistics clinic
- Digitization Innovation park
- Music stations with headphones and playlists
- Big LCD – video display
- Team computing circle, networked computers with headsets for team competitive work and gaming
- Small storage room for group projects
- Mobile charging station

“Aesthetics/Ambiance” - Change the aesthetics and improve the ambiance

- Bringing inside and outside environments together
- Different areas created by different textures and lighting, etc
- Be able to see the whole but different activities in different areas
- Break rooms shouldn't be isolated but shouldn't disturb others
- Microwave, eating
- Change the perception of what people think of CSEL
- Create reasons for non-science and engineering students to come
- Save energy
- Natural light, tubes of light or skylights
- Mini arboretum
- Less institutional yet functional furniture
- Pit sitting area
- Glass sliding doors for carrels
- Group study rooms
- Get rid of icky chairs
- Varied lamps
- Multi-task area that is sound proof for talking on Skype, snacking etc
- White noise units in study rooms
- Digital light displays with different scenes

“Chill Lounge”- Area where you can recharge from your studies

Break room with microwave, coffee maker, snack machines, tables and chairs

Cafeteria with lounge area with table lighting and comfortable chairs, newspapers and magazines

Area to freely socialize –an ice cream sundae station or hot chocolate

Comfortable non-study areas with tv and food

Science museum with information regarding greatest scientists, their inventions and a small touch screen computer to explain their theories