The Student Learning Center

A Vision for UMBC's Future

Presentation on 4/21/08
Evolving Student Learning Needs
Collaboration on Group Projects
“Sometimes we have to work on several computers at the same time creating different portions of an assignment while peering over at another person's work or communicating (not socializing).”

“[We need] space to spread out; technology readily available; ability to talk or make some noise without bothering others.”
The Learning Center Vision

The Student Learning Center will become the location of choice for lively group study, scholarly discussion, collaboration, team building, and academic coaching at UMBC. We will accomplish this by:
Learning Center Vision (cont.)

- Offering immediate access to assistance for research, computing and tutorial needs.
- Providing workspaces for a variety of learning activities in a technology rich environment.
- Connecting students with the information resources and support they need to succeed.
- Developing varied and flexible collaborative spaces that adapt to student’s changing patterns of learning and innovation.
- Creating an interactive environment that facilitates and encourages group learning.
Brief List of Institutions with Learning Centers in the Library

- SUNY Albany
- SUNY Binghamton
- Univ. of Delaware
- Univ. of Arizona
- Univ. of Pennsylvania
- Emory University
- Dickinson College
- Lehigh University
- Dalhousie University
- Univ. of Iowa
- University of Kentucky
- UMass – Amherst
- Georgia Institute of Tech.
- Kent State
- Indiana Univ. – Bloomington
- Univ. of Maine, Orono
- Northwestern Univ.
- University of Guelph
- Colorado College
- Univ. of Chicago
- Univ. of Arkansas
- NCSU
“The Learning Commons is a welcoming place, right in the heart of campus. It removes obstacles to learning, allowing students to make steady progress by finding what they need in one centralized location.”
Attracting New Students

- Most campuses offer this now
- Potential students will expect to see this
- Doing it well will give us a competitive advantage
- We need a WOW factor here for all students
- Especially important for a high-tech campus
- Demonstrates commitment to millennials
- This is the evolution of Library and academic support services
“Here, in one place, students can find both the wealth of research materials available in University Libraries and the technology that’s essential for producing first-rate projects. The newly-designed space represents the melding of research and technology in a center that supports and enhances student learning”
Supporting Retention & Success

- Partnering with LRC and OIT
- Linking learning with research, writing, information literacy and technology skills development
- Promoting each other’s services
- Increase visibility
- Reach an expanded audience
Evidence of Academic Success

"The equipment and support in the Weigle Information Commons made it possible for my class to go beyond reading and analyzing emerging forms of writing and experience some of the challenges for themselves. Both the process and the product were more meaningful because we were able to take advantage of WIC."

Dr. Patrick Wehner, Associate Director of the Critical Writing Program at the University of Pennsylvania
Why the Library?
(quotes from UMBC students)

- “It should be in the library with the books and journals; you would have everything you need in one place.”
- “Many resources are already in the Library, so you could travel back and forth between the traditional library and a student learning center without using a lot of time.”
- “For grad students it would be nice to have a reference person there or on call if you need help finding a journal or something.”
- “It’s good to have a reference librarian handy.”
Envisioning Space Layout

- Basic computer workstations
- Possible expansion 2,000 sq. ft.
- LRC and other staff Help desk extension 800 sq. ft.
- Demo Project area 1
- Demo Project area 2
- Book shelving
- Group study, group workstations, comfortable seating 3,500 sq. ft.
Configured for Individuals…
…or for Groups

Georgia Tech
Variety for Different Learning Needs
Tech Integrated Collaboration Rooms

University of Pennsylvania
Faculty Study Groups and Tutoring
Comfortable Study Options
Inviting Colorful Environment
Meeting Student Needs

- At Indiana University, the main library gate count almost doubled from the year prior to the opening of the information commons to the second full year of its existence.

- The W.E.B. Du Bois Library at UMass-Amherst reports that “in the last two years, Library use nearly doubled from 606,000 users in fiscal year 2005 to over 1.2 million in 2007.”
Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased Enrollment – this innovative space will attract new students
- Increased Student Success and Retention – students need academic development space
- Increased Engagement – collaboration of all types will thrive
- Increased Giving – this dynamic environment will attract increased donor interest
The UMBC community will be transformed and energized by the creation of an inviting hub for learning and collaborative activity on the first floor of the Library. Its placement in this highly visible and accessible location will demonstrate UMBC’s commitment to student success to both current and prospective students.