The Grad Commons in the Academic Library:
Reimagining Collaborative Learning Spaces and Services for Graduate and Professional Students Through Participatory Design

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A #Roadmap for the Grad Commons

Understanding local context

Services and space needs for graduate students

Student governance + Library administration = #FTW

Survey, survey, survey

Realizing new spaces --> policies and procedures

Connecting library spaces strategically
# Student Enrollment at IU Bloomington

## Enrollment by Class and Level

**Bloomington - Fall 2015**

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<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Average Cr Hrs</th>
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<td>% Change</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<td>Freshman</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Senior</td>
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<td>Non-Degree</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>Graduate</td>
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<td>Graduate</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>Doctoral-Research</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Doctoral-Practice</td>
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<td>Non-Degree</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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| Total        | 5% | 48,514 | 5% | 14% | 2% | 5% | 12.3 |
IUB Libraries

12th largest in N. America
20+ libraries across campus
>8 million print volumes
900+ languages
International/area studies
Humanities & social sciences
Graduate student survival @ iulibraries
#JustASK = Survey, survey, survey

2008 Graduate Student Library Satisfaction Survey

“Grad only study area”
“A place for grad students where undergrads are not allowed”
“The undergrads are sometimes playing around making it hard to concentrate.”
“Graduate-only”; “Graduate-only”; “Graduate-only”

2011 Grad Summit

Work more directly with the GPSG
Graduate & Professional Student Government
Library Committee

History & Overview
Advocacy
The “Grad Pad”
Envisioning a space for graduate student research
A Modest Proposal (late Fall, 2011)

Purpose:
Provide quiet, secure space for graduate students to study and store materials in close proximity to library resources

Create a break room for socializing, research consultations with librarians

Build community among graduate students within and across disciplines
“I’m not interested in this being a social space”

“I’d just like a space where undergrads can’t mess with my stuff”

“As long as it’s quiet”

“Create this space ASAP”

“About damn time!”
Not asking much...
What grad students deemed most important

- Access to a power outlet
- Table space to accommodate laptop/research materials
- Access to the Internet
- Comfortable chairs

“And quiet. Seriously quiet.”
Partnering in the design of the Grad Commons
The space before...
The Grad Commons realized
Conduct & Environment
The primary purpose of the Grad Commons (GC) is to provide an environment for graduate students to be productive and work. Students using the GC should work quietly, refrain from talking, and avoid disrupting their colleagues. Please seek alternative spaces for discussion-based group work (Consultation Rooms in the Scholars' Commons or available for graduate students at http://libraries.iub.edu/scholars-commons-consultation-rooms-policies). The Grad Commons is self-monitored and anyone disrupting the work of others may be asked by their colleagues to cease activity or leave. Those who wish to file a complaint must do so via e-mail (See Governance).

Emergency & Personal Safety
Do not leave personal belongings unattended. Report any threatening behavior to Circulation/Security (855-4673). Call 911 for all emergencies. When the fire alarm is activated, occupants must leave the building. During severe weather events, follow directives of library staff.

Access
The GC is for graduate student use and entry requires a valid IU Bloomington graduate student ID. Exceptions to access include guest speakers, scheduled event participants, librarians, and staff. Those using the space must not provide access to unauthorized individuals.
Assessment

Graduate Commons Entries by Month & Day

Date / Weekday

February

2014

March

Event

Access Granted: (FC) Used
Access Granted: Door Used

Number of Records

0 50 100 150 200

Saturday  Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday  Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday  Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday

84 128 122 163 144 138 105 65 84 76 81 130 196 153 172 129 98 80 91 187 177
Assessment
The Scholars’ Commons

- “Designed on the cutting edge of research and scholarly publishing, the IU Scholars’ Commons supports the journey from curiosity to discovery to publication. Researchers—whether faculty, staff, or students—come first in this space where they will find a powerful academic service hub that offers easy access to experts and technology for every stage of their scholarship.”

- “The space itself has been designed to stimulate scholarly conversation, interdisciplinary exchange, and intellectual discovery.”
Exhibit Space
Digitization Lab
Consultation Rooms
Hazelbaker Hall
The Scholars’ Commons

Programming

- **Scholars’ Commons Series**
  - The workshops are designed to help researchers and scholars manage the process and understand the technology, tools, and best practices that will help them move their work forward, apply for grants, and get published in a variety of platforms.

- **Popular Mini-series**
  - CartoShop: Workshops on Digital Mapping
  - Digital Library Brown Bag Series
  - Maker Mondays
  - Measure Twice, Scan Once
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Monday Motivators Series

- Partner with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Workshops include:
  - Think Happy!
  - Stress Management
  - Conquer Procrastination
  - Help Me Sleep!
    - “Can’t fall asleep? Waking up tired? We can help you sleep better! Improved sleep increases your concentration and learning and balances your mood. Brooke Halpern, M.A., will help you find ways to change the way you sleep.”
- Other partners: UITS, Office of the Vice Provost for Research, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts and Sciences, Data to Insight Center, Office of Research Administration, University Graduate School, and many more.
Ideas for Future Collaboration & Programming

- More collaboration with students and professors
- Go digital and reach farther
- Pair workshops directly with courses
- Strengthen relationship with GPSG to shape new spaces
Thank you!

Questions?

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