



Providence College *Library Commons*

*The Evolving Commons Concept
Information, Learning,
Teaching, Research*

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The Tradition of
The Commons

Shared

**Use, Management and Replenishment
of**

Spaces and Resources

- land, water, airspace -

- tools, crops, game and fish –

in

Europe, New England and Elsewhere



Whence The Commons?

In North America

- **The Junior/Community College Library
(Learning Resource Center)**

multi-functional and integrated for more efficient day, evening and weekend access

- **Liberal Arts College libraries**

multi-functional and integrated due to small size and interdisciplinarity, interconnectedness of curriculum

See INFORUM 2005 presentation for full history:

<http://www.inforum.cz/inforum2005/english/prispevek.php-prispevek=32.htm>



What is the Commons?

An Organizing Principle for

Patrons

Partners

Services

Resources

Tools

Spaces

Activities



The Commons

an Organizing Principle to:

- **Focus primarily on patron needs as they evolve**
- **Provide a seamless continuum of services and resources**
- **Adapt “one-stop shopping” model**
- **Provide a seamless integration (from patron’s perspective) of services and resources**
- **Promote the mutual inclusion of “high-touch” ↔ “high-tech”**
- **Promote the inclusion and integration of *extra-library, non-traditional* resources and services**



The Commons is

**the Framework
in which**

the Curriculum is

Information (Research and Productivity) Literacy

the Content is

High-touch ↔ High- tech tools and information resources



I. Seamless Integration of

High-touch/Low-tech



High-tech/Asynchronous



The Borat Sagdiyev Commons in Almaty, Kazakhstan



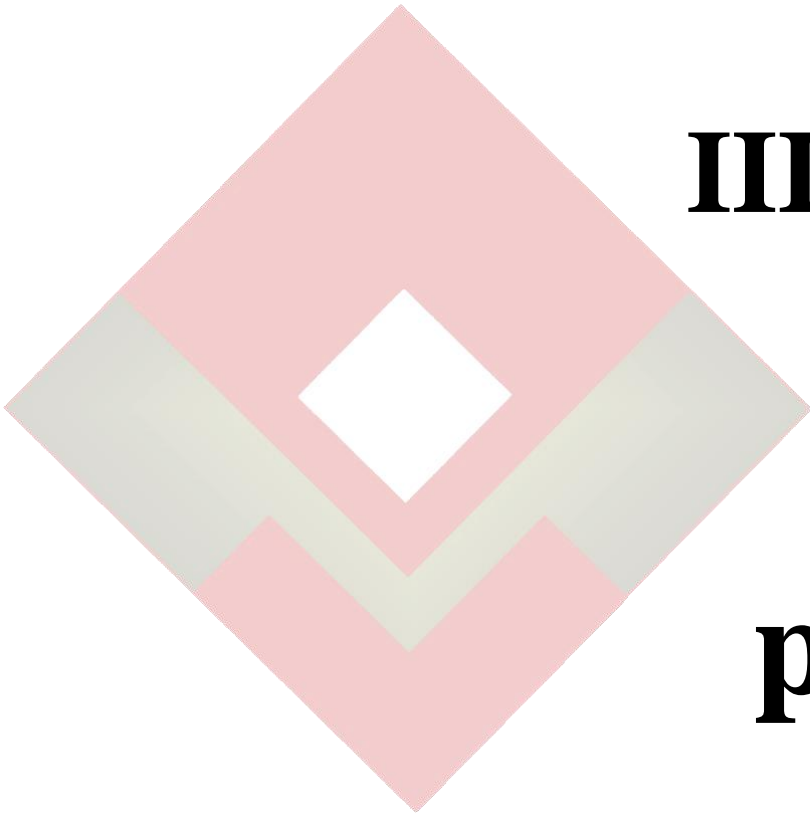
II. The Structure and Character

**of the whole
is imbued into
each integral
constituent part**



Reference Desk → *Information Station*





III. Focus

on

patron

needs

Commons Macintosh Stations

Rhode Island School of Design



The Commons

is the library designed & focused exclusively on patron needs:

1. Point of Need: where patrons are in their work: reflection → research → analysis → synthesis → processing-to-product → evaluation
2. Level of Need: freshmen, graduate, faculty research, other?

3. **Time of Need**: anytime, 24/7
4. **Place of Need**: in-library, dorm, across town, the country, the world: anywhere
5. **Format of Need**: although we often guide patrons to the entire collected series, the book, chapter, or journal article, our patrons prefer, and are accustomed to, using key-word searches (Google, etc.) to find only the page, the chart, graph, sentence or phrase
6. **Speed of Need**: although we often prefer that patrons spend 10-45 minutes with us to find the best collection of information for their research needs, they often prefer to do quicker searching and fill their need in less than 5 minutes, often in 30 seconds or less





Stages of the Commons

**Student-Focused:
Information Commons
Learning Commons**

**Faculty-Focused:
Teaching Commons
Research Commons**



Information Commons Levels One & Two

Level One

An Adjustment -

e.g., a computer lab with basic productivity software in the library, with resource access and some coordination; minimal space design implications

- library-centric -

Level Two

- Isolated Change -

e.g., a computer lab with a broad range of multi-media productivity software and formats, access to all resources and *extensive integration of space, resources and staff* into the continuum of services, with significantly altered patterns of service, aligned with institutional mission;

- library-centric -



- **Physically located on one or more floors of a library**
- **Providing access to traditional library services (high-touch) - general information, library catalog access, reference services, reserves, circulation, ILL, etc.**
- **Constituting a high-technology-rich environment (high-tech) – networks, public access machines of various types as needed**
- **Providing resources (hardware, software, support) for what was formerly a “computer lab” plus various specialty computer labs (e.g., scanning lab, multi-media lab, etc.) integrated in terms of space, desks, staff, training, etc., into the traditional library services**



- **With the full range of productivity software (e.g., MSOffice, SPSS/SAS, ArcView, Maple, Adobe Acrobat, Photoshop, OmniPage, Illustrator, Premiere, InDesign, etc.)**
- **Using the “electronic continuum of knowledge media” often call the “virtual commons”**
- **Various collaborative learning and work spaces**
- **Beagle’s “continuum of service: 1. search & retrieval, 2. processing and interpretation, and 3. packaging, presentation and production**
- **At level two, near-seamless integration in terms of space, services, resources, services desks, staff and appropriate cross-training**



Commons Clusters

Indiana University Bloomington



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Learning Commons Levels Three & Four

Level Three

**- Far-reaching change -
add faculty development /
teaching & e-learning center,
course management system
integration, virtual
reference; more
collaborative**

- *not library-centric* -

Level Four

**- Transformational change –
add closer strategic alignment, greater
functional integration, Institutional
Repository (e.g., D-Space), writing /
authoring across the curriculum
involvement including an integrated
laboratory, greater involvement within
and beyond library of fuller range of
institutional functions and activities in
breadth and depth; planning, design,
knowledge (and perhaps product)
creation / construction / fabrication**

- *not library-centric* -



Learning Commons Level Three

Includes all aspects of the Information Commons, but to a greater extent -

- **Clearly and explicitly aligned strategically with the institution-wide vision and mission – a dynamic and active partner in the broad educational enterprise**
- **Imbues most of the library with the integrative perspective**
- **Includes traditional (high-touch) and technology rich (high-tech)**
- **Fuller range of technological resources, more seamlessly integrated**
- **More, more varied and more adjustable collaborative work spaces**
- **Extended “continuum” to emphasize more creation and construction of knowledge**
- **Probably includes a cyber-café with good drink and food**



Learning Commons Level Four

Not library-centric – brings into and includes within the “library” many formerly external functions and activities, and extends into the former homes of these functions and activities: e.g.,

- **Faculty development center / center for teaching & e-learning**
- **Integration of “library” into a course management system – WebCT, Blackboard, etc.**
- **Centers for writing, learning support (tutorials), special programs (e.g., Honors), learning communities, career counseling**
- **Many collaborative work spaces of greatly varied types, sizes and adjustability**
- **Greater emphasis on the far end of the continuum, e.g., creation and construction of knowledge in Institutional Repository and Open Archives type activities**
- **Faculty “shared offices”, collaborative spaces in library**
- **May include such less-traditional library functions and activities as exhibitions, readings, performances (music, dance, theater, etc.), gaming, lectures, dances, panel discussion, institution-wide fora on important / current/controversial topics, putt-putt, design-to-fabrication-labs, etc.**
- **Includes a cyber-café with good drink and food**



Commons Huts

SUNY Binghamton



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UMass Amherst

What can patrons do in the LC?

- Collaborate
- Socialize
- Eat and drink
- Meet in group study rooms and spaces
- Study
- Use library collections
- Use licensed software and databases
- View exhibits
- Attend events and training
- Attend library instruction
- Copy, print, scan
- Ask any kind of question
- Get technology, writing, research, information, career services, academic advising, adaptive technology, academic tutoring, supplemental instruction, and all library services
- Use wireless
- Borrow tablet PCs and projectors
- Buy office supplies



Mobile Phone Booth

UMass Amherst



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UMass Amherst Services

- Desk 1: General information
- Desk 2: Building Operations
- Desk 3: Circulation
- Desk 4: Learning Commons and Technical Support
- Desk 5: Reference and Research Assistance
- Desk 6: Academic Advising Link/Career Services/International Programs
- Desk 7: Media/Reserves
- Room/Service Point: Writing Center
- Room: Assistive Technology
- Room: instruction and service provider programming; drop in lab



Commons Vending Machine

UMass Amherst



Faculty Commons - Teaching

- Usually allied with institution's Center for Teaching Excellence / Faculty Center for Teaching / Instructional Technology Design and Development Center
- Needs access to high-end technology hardware, software and support, including: processing; storage; audio / video creating, manipulation/editing, cataloging, metadata tagging for searching capabilities; and full facility resources for multi-media interaction with peers both near and remote
- Needs collaborative access to library liaisons / bibliographers and all informational resources in all formats
- Needs access to variable work spaces – individual / private, collaborative, outfitted with office tools
- Needs access to a digital institutional repository to store, meta-tag, search, retrieve, and manipulate the instructional, curricular library of the institution (syllabi, bibliographies, lesson plans, activities, multi-media files) and colleagues far and wide



Faculty Commons – Research

- **Needs access to high-end technology hardware, software and support, including:**
 - **Processing**
 - **Storage**
 - **Audio / video creating, manipulation/editing, cataloging, metadata tagging for searching capabilities**
 - **Full facility resources for multi-media interaction with peers both near and remote**
 - **Specialty PC / Macintosh / Unix computers / multimedia / peripherals, including large-format scanning and printing**
 - **GIS, virtual reality and visualization tools and support**
 - **Collaborative technologies (hardware, software, broadband file-movement and storage capacity)**
- **Needs collaborative access to library liaisons / bibliographers and all informational resources in all formats**
- **Needs access to variable work spaces – individual / private, collaborative, outfitted with office and multi-site communication tools**
- **Needs access to a digital institutional repository to store, meta-tag, search, retrieve, and manipulate files in each medium, all media and multi-media files, including large data-set files, and send/receive these files among colleagues far and wide**



***Sample* Research Commons Project**

Indiana University Bloomington

Introductory Level Space

Scholars Reading Room

Scholar workspaces

Consultation spaces

**Small & large seminar
rooms**

Exhibit spaces

**Dedicated spaces for
introduction of new
technologies**

Research center incubator

Introductory Level Services

**Reference / Research
consultation**

Technology support

Circulation of materials

**Reference collections –
traditional and electronic**

**Computers / multimedia /
peripherals**

**ScholarWorks – University
of Kansas repository**

<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/>

Copyright resources

**Virtual reality and
visualization support**



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Sample **Scholars Lab:**

E-text, scanning, digital media and research computing support

Scholar Spaces

**Technology-equipped
rooms**

Seminar rooms

**Short-term project-
based offices for
faculty and / or
librarians**

High-end computing lab

Scholar Services

Specialized services consultation:

Digital library projects

Metadata

**Digital media production,
delivery, archiving**

**Storage and delivery of digital
content**

Staffed by Library, IT

**Distribution of and assistance with
licensed software**

Access to collaborative technology

**Consultation on demand or by
appointment**



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Sample Collections and Centers of expertise with the appropriate staff and services distributed throughout library to support research

Spaces

Research level collections in all subject content areas

Faculty studies, graduate student carrels, as well as general user seating

Extensive electricity / data for laptop use

Semi-secure reading rooms

Appropriate balance of solitary and collaborative spaces

State-of-the-art classrooms

Graduate Student Center

Writing Tutorial Services

Grad Grants Center

Services

Support for geospatial data use, storage, GIS

Quantitative and qualitative analysis software consultation

High-performance computing and personal research database support

Statistical and math services consultation

Specialized reference expertise and advanced searching assistance



RENCI- HSL Display Wall UNC Chapel Hill

Its capabilities turn out to be very congruent with the multi-faceted roles of a Learning Commons. It has the physical scope to enable review of broad patterns & wide-ranging phenomena, and yet the power of high-definition resolution to probe small elements of detail within those patterns. It has the potential to be an extraordinary tool for group process learning. Plus, when combined with the Access Grid for virtual real-time conferencing, it introduces the aspect of extended communities of learning.

<http://www.hsl.unc.edu/Collaboration/ccdisplaywall.cfm>



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RENCI- HSL Display Wall UNC Chapel Hill



<http://www.hsl.unc.edu/Collaboration/ccdisplaywall.cfm>



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Resources

Information Commons Handbook – Don Beagle (Russ Bailey, Barbara Tierney), 2006

Transforming Library Service Through Information Commons – Case Studies for the Digital Age – Russ Bailey and Barbara Tierney, February, 2008

“Conceptualizing an Information Commons,” Don Beagle, *JAL*, 1999.

“Information Commons Redux,” Russ Bailey & Barbara Tierney, *JAL*, 2002

Susan McMullen, Roger Williams University

http://faculty.rwu.edu/s McMullen/site_visits.htm

Joanne Henning, University of Victoria

<http://jhenning.law.uvic.ca/sitevisits.html>

Providence College Digital Commons

http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/lib_publications/

UNC Charlotte IC Website

<http://library.uncc.edu/infocommons/conference/huntsville2007/>

INFOCOMMONS-L Listserv

<http://listserv.binghamton.edu/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A0=INFOCOMMONS-L>

The Advancement of Learning. Building the Teaching Commons. Mary Taylor Huber and Pat Hutchings, 2005

The Academic Library and the Net Gen Student, Susan Gibbons, 2007.



The Future.....

Group Study Yurt

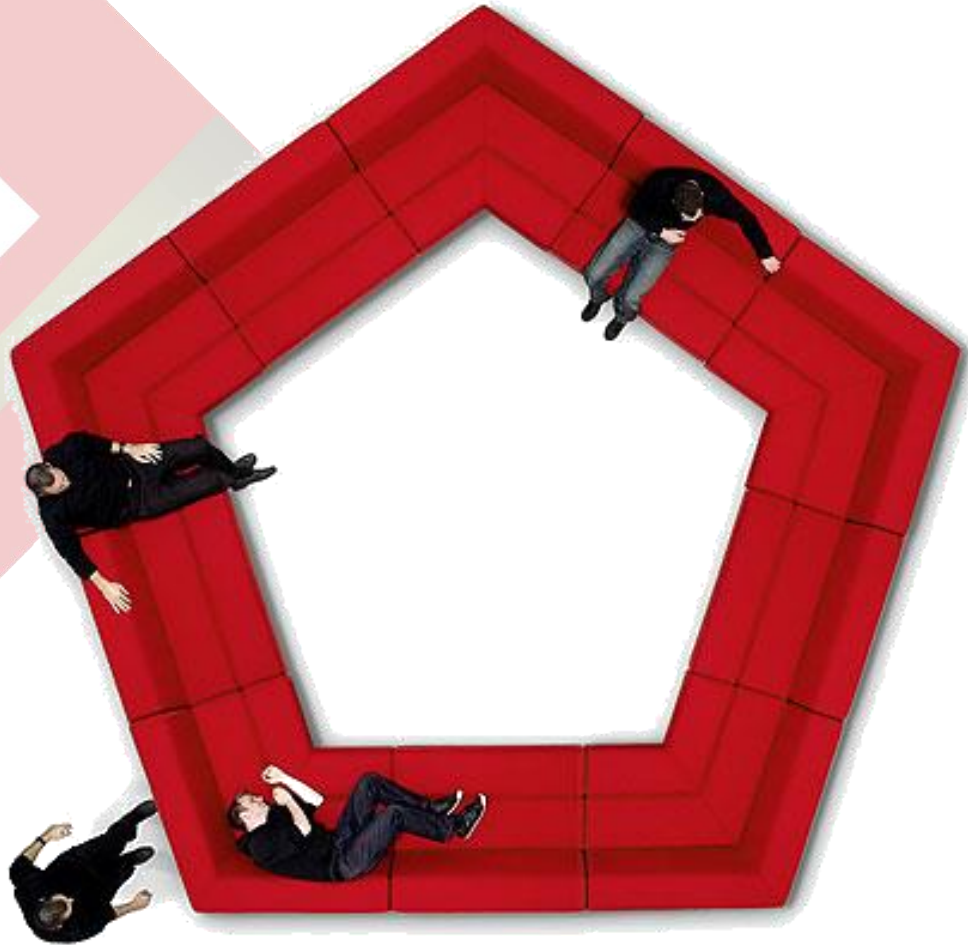


STEELCASE

Cube dwellers can cluster in these futuristic yurts, whose Corian shells muffle noise

Source: Steelcase

Group Study Couch



Source: <http://mocoloco.com/archives/002607.php#more>



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Walk Station (by Steel Case)

