

Fall 11-17-2021

“For the People: A Collaborative Space Assessment”: A Joyful Interpretation of Room Design

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“For the People: A Collaborative Space Assessment”:

A Joyful Interpretation of Room Design

Anne Holland

Honors Project

Submitted to the Honors College

at Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for graduation with

UNIVERSITY HONORS 17 Nov. 2021

Professor Gregory Rich, Department of Marketing, Advisor

Professor Meredith Gilbertson, Department of Sociology, Advisor

Introduction:

The public is more familiar with bad designs than good ones. Currently in the basement of Founders Residence Hall on the Bowling Green State University campus there is an old unused cafeteria space. This space has not only the potential but the ability to become something new, something of use. It is an area that could not only be renovated and redone by the Honors College but a place that could become a home to collaboration on a major scale. Bowling Green State University and the Honors College could be greatly improved by a new collaboration space. A space that fosters creativity, joy, and a desire to learn.

The central idea of this project is to provide not only the floorplans but also the driving ideologies behind these designs. These concepts should function as more than some lines on paper, they should function as inspired designs which work for everyone. When designing for the modern world there are several things to consider. First, who is the room for, is it accessible to all, does it inspire you, and what is this space meant to accomplish? If those questions are all taken into consideration the design output can be magical. Which is what this project hopes to achieve, the magic of a new reality of design.

Literature Review:

The works that were consulted to complete this research were wide and varying. The topics fell into two different categories, those related to research and those related to interior design and accessibility. There were eight sources collected relating to those topics. As well as the Co-Investigator Devan Harmychs's paper which holds the other essential information related

to this project and the budget. Harmychs's paper covers the other half of this project which is of interest for those who may wish to learn more about the financial side of things relating to interior design.

Additionally, those works relating to research covered topics such as critical thinking, how to design survey and interview questions, how to boost reliability and responses, and how to analyze the responses received. The works relating to interior design and accessibility covered topics such as collaboration, human factors, physical and mental disability, the importance of intention and joy, and inclusion.

There were many lessons learned from these sources. The most important two of these lessons being listen to those around you and work hard to create more intelligent designs. This world is one that needs to be improved in its designs, from things as simple as a closet to as grand as a building. These new designs need to be made so they are functional, accessible, and joyful. If the spaces, we inhabit are ones that do not inspire those are spaces not worth inhabiting. The only way to know if those spaces are effective is to listen to those around us and gain feedback. Which is why an integral part of this project was feedback from fellow students as well as faculty members.

Research Methods:

This space has been under consideration for over ten years and has had several previous design attempts. With the help of another student (Co-Investigator Devan Harmyich) the research phase of this project was able to start. The first step was to draft questions that would help guide the design process. Those questions are listed below.

Guiding Project Questions:

- What are the expectations of students and faculty for a collaboration and workspace?
- How can we revitalize the outdated cafeteria space to fit student and faculty expectations?

Once the project had a direction, the decision was made to create a student survey for the Honors College students and a series of in-depth interview questions for the Honors Faculty at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). These questions can be found below in Appendix A. Once all the questions were drafted and finalized the next step was to get everything approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The approval process took over six months with many revisions and the approval letter can be seen below in appendix B. The IRB also approved two consent forms, one for our student survey as well as one for our in-depth faculty interviews.

Moving forward, the next step was starting the series of in-depth interviews with Honors College faculty and sending out the survey to Honors College students. There was a total of four faculty interviews completed and 27 student survey responses collected. The results of the survey and summaries of those interviews can be found in the attached PowerPoints named “Faculty In-Depth Interview Key Points” and Student Survey Responses, data presentation.”

Finally, once the results were collected and analyzed, three floorplans were able to be created, one for the student’s preferences, one for the faculty preferences, and one for a combination of student and faculty preferences. Co-investigator Devan Harmych created three budgets and based each one on one of the floor plans. These budgets can be found on ScholarWorks under the paper authored by Devan Harmych named: *For the People: A Collaborative Space Assessment: Budget and Analysis*

Results:

There were three key themes found in the results of the faculty interviews. Those themes were lighting, mobility, and comfortability. The faculty were concerned with how the space would be lit, how the furniture can be mobile to fit multiple needs, and what can be done to the space to make everyone feel welcome. These themes were persistent in all four interviews, with all faculty being excited for the space's potential even with its concerns. Interview one's faculty member summed up comfortability the best when they said, "A student must feel comfortable and confident in a space to produce their best work." More details from the faculty interviews can be found in the attached PowerPoint presentation named "Faculty In-Depth Interview Key Points".

For the student survey results there were several trends that also came to light. First the students wanted a space that can function not only for group work but for individual work as well. They want to feel comfortable yet confident in the space, being able to speak their opinions and be heard without being brushed off. Second, regarding the furniture the students wanted a mixture of regular tables and chairs as well as rolling desks. This mixture was mainly decided upon several students' comments in the final survey question of "Any other comments or concerns regarding this space?" One student reported, "the mobility of rolling desks is nice, but they do not provide the space needed for larger projects." They also wanted the space to be interactive with the inclusion of a one button studio and whiteboards. More information and specific statistical analysis can be found in the attached PowerPoint named "Student Survey Responses Data Presentation."

Designing the Floor Plans:

Creating the design of the floorplans was a challenging aspect of this project. Catering to the needs of one group is hard enough, let alone catering to two groups who have differing visions and wants for a space. However, with the data collected from both students and faculty as well as ideas from previously designed collaboration spaces on BGSU's campus (like the Collaboration Lab in the Jerome Library) the floor plans came together. All designs can be referenced in the attached PowerPoint labeled "Floor Plan Presentation" or in Appendix C which is found at the end of this paper. Along with the floor plan designs in the PowerPoint, there are several visual aids on how to light the space, create unique moments in the space as well as bring life to the space.

The first plan was designed based on the likes, wants, and needs of solely students. The students had very simple desires, with their main focuses being how the space should function as a place to study alone as well as to collaborate with one or more people. They wanted the ease of access to resources like the One Button studio and whiteboards to express their ideas to a larger audience. This floor plan was designed with two break out rooms, a dividing wall in the main space and a one button studio in its own room. In addition, there is also a storage closet, a sink, and a counter.

The second plan was designed based on the likes, wants, and needs of both faculty and students. Both groups desired a space that can be multipurpose, functioning for both individual or collaborative needs and potentially classroom needs. This is a space that allows for student run projects as well as general lectures and activities. The floor plan consists of a large main room

with a multitude of rolling desks and whiteboards, with two smaller conference rooms coming off the main room as well as a storage closet.

The third and final floor plan consists of needs, likes, and wants of the Honors College Faculty. The faculty members desired mainly group driven spaces that can be used for multiple purposes, from lectures to guest speakers and even just as a regular classroom. This floor plan is divided into two rooms, a large main room with rolling desks, whiteboards, and a lectern for faculty. The second more narrow room features several large tables for students to gather around and work together while faculty can be more mobile and walk around the students.

Why Joy and Accessibility are Important in Design:

The concepts of joy and accessibility can be hard to understand if one has never worked with them before. When it comes to designs, they need to apply to everyone who may potentially use the space. They need to have an ease of access as well as be mindful, not every person is the same, or has the same level of ability. Going with that is the concept of joy, if a space has no joy people will not function to their highest capabilities. Joy is a broad concept that has many facets, for the purpose of this research joy functions as a concept of uplifting and desire. The spaces that have been designed have been changed to include facets that create joy and draw the user in.

When it comes to accessibility Founders Hall does a decent job. The building features ramps and elevators for those who are physically impaired. There is soft and natural lighting as well as soundproofing to create a calm environment for those who may be easily overstimulated. However, there is room for improvement. With the designs created to fit in Founders Hall there was a desire to continue the functional flow they have with a few tweaks. The doors to the space

will have power assist so those who might not be able to open or hold doors open can easily get in. The lighting will be natural through the use of windows and lighting devices that mimic the sun's natural patterns. Finally, the furniture will be mobile with most of it on wheels, so no one has to strain or worry about having to get around immovable objects.

As far as the concept of joy, Founder Hall Dormitory, and the Honors Spaces in the basement of the hall lack joy. The space feels formal and dated, this is a main reason for the addition of joy into the floor plan designs. Joy while an intangible concept can still be spread, felt, and experienced. A major influence on joy is color. Color is a huge part of the human experience of life. It is everywhere and influences even the smallest decisions. Ingrid Lee explores the concept of joy as well as color in her book *Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness*. She says that color is a major influencer of mood and productivity and that with simple changes to everyday spaces a person's quality of life can greatly improve.

For the space there were three main ideas that were decided upon. First the walls should be painted a color that is not beige or white like the rest of the building. Those colors do not pick up light or elevate mood, they are very neutral. Second the space should feature an accent wall. Whether this be an LED sign with a positive phrase or simply a mural painted by the students. Both art and light bring joy and sponsor creativity. Third the space should include "life", in this case "life" refers to plants, they can be small or large, but they should be included. Plants not only help their environment by purifying the air, but they bring a sense of peace due to their coloration and intentionality. By giving the students and faculty something, they can include to make the space feel like home, it will increase the likelihood the space will be used and appreciated.

Future implications:

The success of these designs in the future relies on consistent and unbiased reassessment of student and faculty wants and desires for the space. As long as the Honors College continues to stay tapped into its members the designs will be easy to modify for future use. Consistency is the key to success in this case. It is possible that these renovations will not be completed for several years due to many factors like the budget and supply chain issues. However, the necessity of concepts like accessibility and joy will last forever. Everyone needs something to hold onto that inspires them, this space and its concept can be that.

While these designs and the furniture may become outdated as the years pass on the data collected through this research will remain valuable. The needs and wants of those who contributed will most likely remain consistent as the college landscape continues to grow and change as it always has. Everyone needs a place where they feel comfortable, where they can express themselves and be heard. That concept is what is integral to this collaboration space, and it will apply in the future to any new designs.

Conclusion:

The outcomes of this research are simple, to create a space that matters one must focus on the needs of the people who will use it. It is easy to create a beautiful space, however if that space does not function for those it was built for it has no point. The Honors College at BGSU has a wonderful opportunity in front of it to take the designs made here, advance them through whichever architecture firm they choose and create a space valued by the community. A

collaboration space that embodies joy, accessibility and design can only move the Honors College and its members forward.

Appendix A:

Student Survey and In-Depth Interview Questions

In-Depth Interview:

1. In a collaborative space what type of technology would you like to see?
2. Based on the classwork you typically do, what type of furniture would best maximize the space?
3. What makes teaching in other classrooms outside the honors college a better experience?
4. What do you considered to be the best classroom on campus and why?

Student Survey:

1. In a collaborative space, what type of technology would you like to see? Select all that apply
 - a. A projector (with a projector, students could use it to give group presentations and faculty could use it to host classes in the room. This would provide quicker access to class and a place to prerecord a presentation)
 - b. A Bluetooth T.V (this is a television that one can connect to through the use of Bluetooth technology. This allows for students to share their work on a larger screen, so it is easier to see)
 - c. A Desktop computer (a desktop computer is a computer monitor connected to a computer box. This would be connected to the BGSU system, giving students access to printing and other additional software a student might need)

2. In a collaborative space, would you like separate tables and chairs? Why or why not? On a scale of one to ten, one being strongly dislike and ten being strongly like, where does your opinion about this furniture fall?
3. In a collaborative space, would you like rolling desks? Why or why not? On a scale of one to ten, one being strongly dislike and ten being strongly like, where does your opinion about this furniture fall?
4. Would you be interested in a one button studio? If not, please explain your answer. On a scale of one to ten, one being strongly dislike and ten being strongly like, where does your opinion on this concept fall?

A one button studio is an enclosed space where students can record themselves and create projects. Provided in the space will be a professional microphone to record oneself, a professional camera for video, and a computer to save the work once it is finished. It is called a one button studio because of its ease of usage and all one would have to do is hit a single button to record oneself. The studio could be used to record group or solo projects and even interviews. In addition, there would be a projector so one can display their work behind them while they record.

5. Any other comments or concerns regarding this space?

Appendix B:

The IRB approval process was completed by Co-investigators Devan Harmych and Anne Holland; however, the approval email was only sent to Devan Harmych.



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

DATE: July 19, 2021

TO: Devan Harmych
FROM: Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [1751594-3] For the People; A Collaborative Space Assessment
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: July 19, 2021
EXPIRATION DATE: May 2, 2022
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the [Review Details page](#). You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

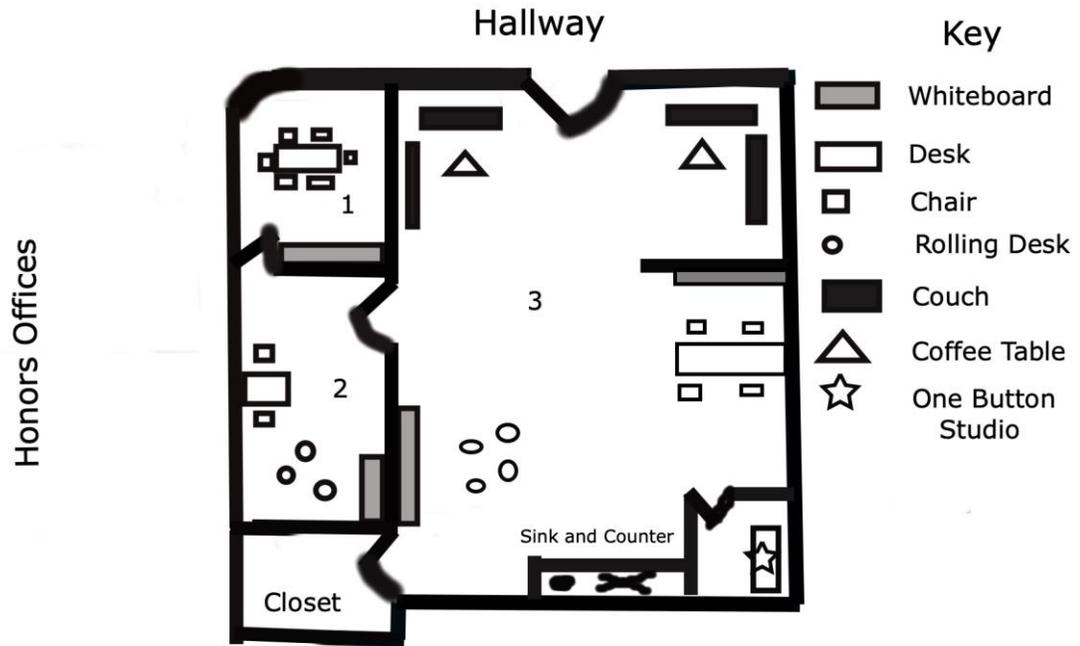
All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on May 2, 2022. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

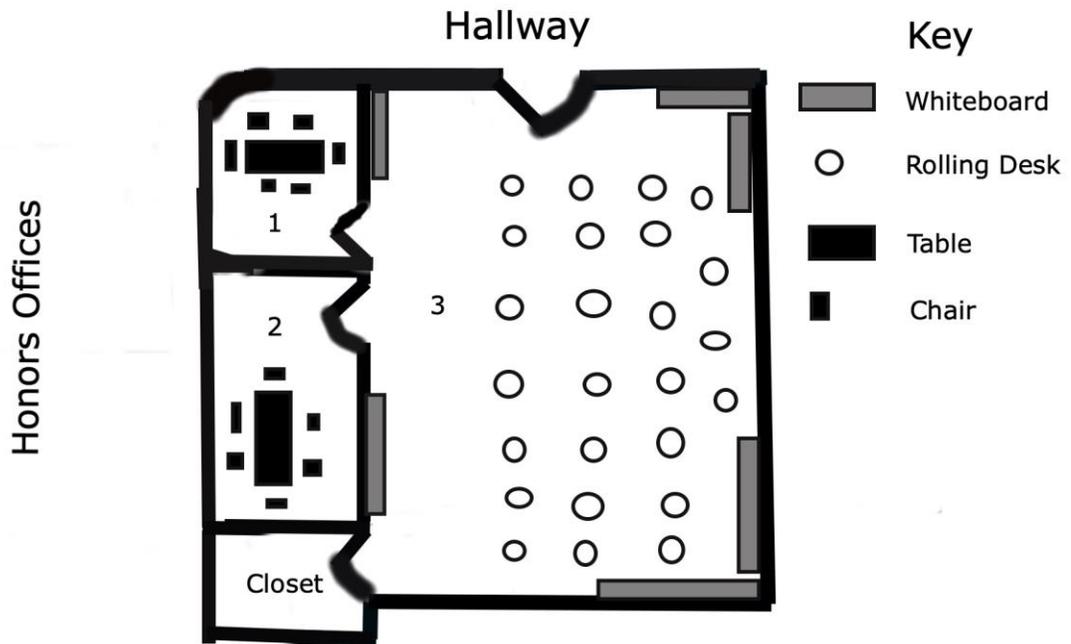
If you have any questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Appendix C:

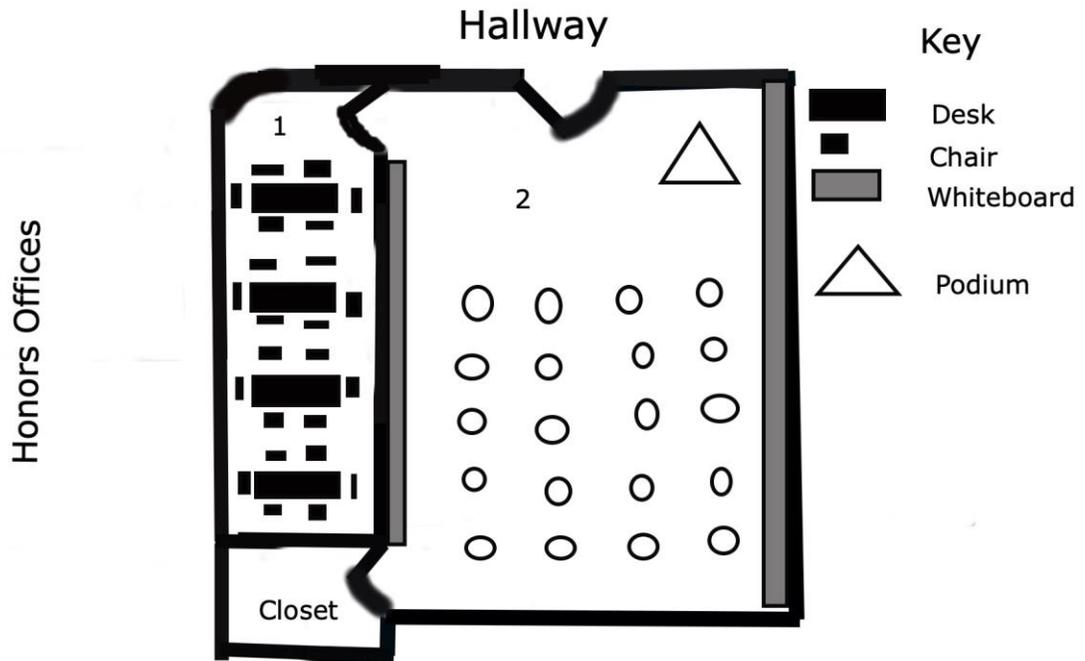
Floor Plan #1- Student Based Design



Floor Plan #2- Combination Faculty and Student Based Design



Floor Plan #3- Faculty Based Design



Citations:

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