

A New Library, Now What? Implementing Responsive, Life Cycle Space Assessment for Evolving User Needs

The Joint-Use Library, Tidewater Community College

Sarah E. Falls, MA, MSLS

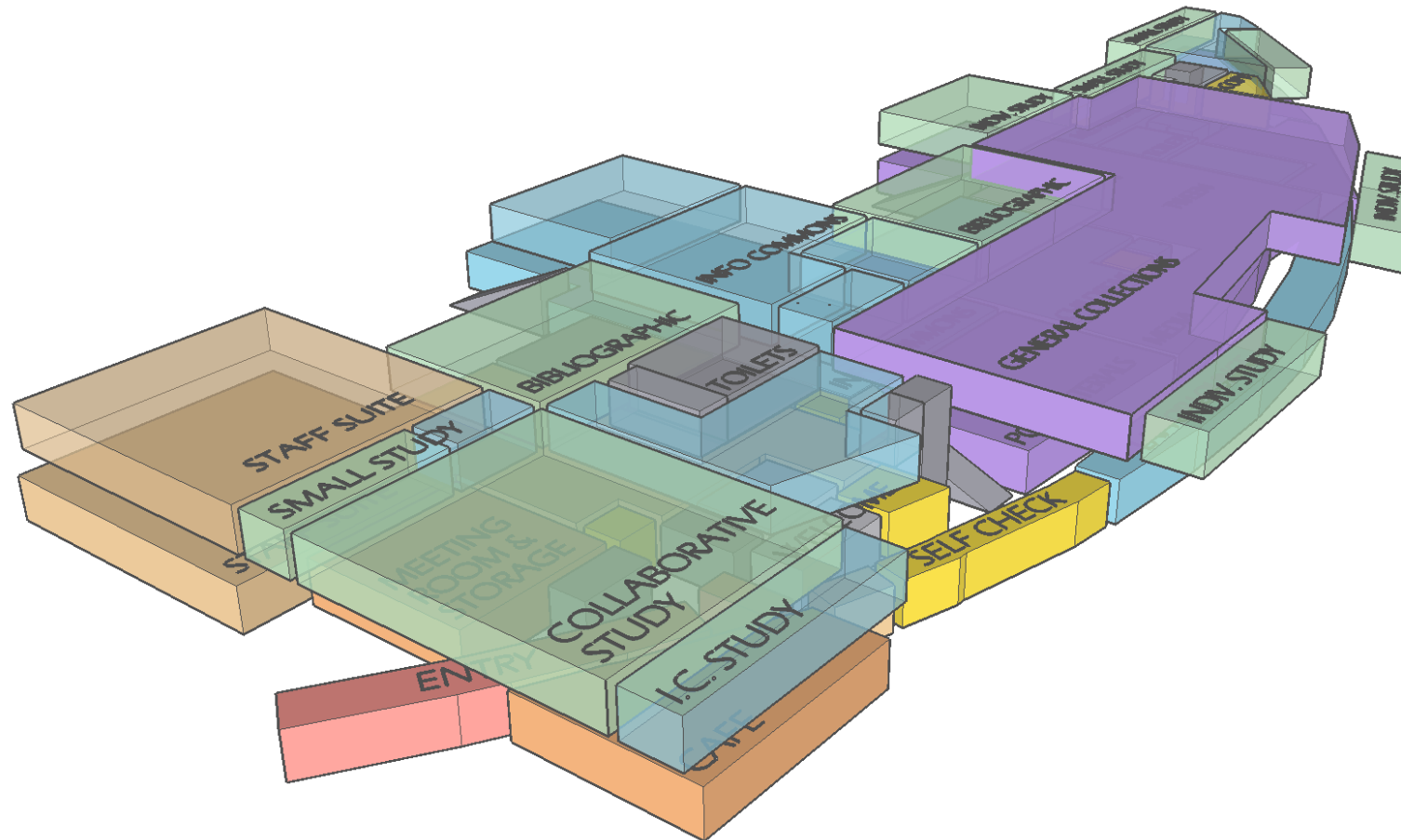
Director of Library Services, Joint-Use Library

Tidewater Community College

Background on the Joint-Use Library

- Talks began in 2005 between VBPL and TCC
- Needs assessment, round tables, community input began in 2006
- Planning & interior architects: Anderson Brulé; Architects of record, RRMM, and Carrier & Johnson + CULTURE, design architects.
- To make such a project work, LOTS of talking happened so that collaboration was literally built into the walls
- Opened in August 2013
- Reached LEED Gold status
- Design Problem: How to house two libraries seamlessly under one roof, how to provide patrons with comfortable spaces, how to join indoor and outdoor environments under the roof
- I began as director in Jan. 2016; former interior design librarian, current CIDA commissioner





Architectural programming schematic, Anderson Brulé Architects,
<http://aba-arch.com/Portfolio/education/TCC-VB-Joint-Library>

The JUL

- Recently named the most beautiful library in Virginia by *Elle Décor Magazine*
- 124,000 sq ft of open, transitional space
- Daylighting
- Natural environment echoed throughout the design
- 35 study rooms
- 4 classrooms, fully wired
- 200 computers for students and public to use in 2 large, staffed computer labs
- Four service points, including one large multi purpose “welcome desk”
- Children’s room
- A/V Crystal for multi-purpose space
- Meeting rooms hold 100 and available to public
- Coffee shop



The TCC/VBPL Joint-Use Library, image from Anderson Brulé Architects, <http://aba-arch.com/Portfolio/education/TCC-VB-Joint-Library>

What happens under our roof?

- Approx. 2000 people per day
- Vast array of programming through public library
- Job fairs
- Exhibits, symposia
- Campus and public events alike
- Approx. 150 instruction sessions per semester
- Study rooms—student work, home schooling, small community groups
- Constant care and feeding of relationship with City required
- A tight architectural program, but a lack of a cohesive outreach program between the City and TCC



The TCC/VBPL Joint-Use Library interior “Main Street”, image from Anderson Brulé Architects, <http://aba-arch.com/Portfolio/education/TCC-VB-Joint-Library>

Technology—what has changed since 2008?

- 2010—iPads and ubiquitous handheld computing
- 2011—4G and cloud services
- 2012—online media streaming outpaces DVD's

- In libraries—elimination of reference sections due to electronic resources

It's a new building, when do we start assessment?

- In this context, assessment means: How far from the original intent of individual spaces have we strayed? Does this space still function well in its original context? Does the overall architectural program still match how the building is used?
- Does our spaces still convey our mission—to be seamless to our users?
- Many lenses through which to consider assessment—user experience, technology, instruction, etc. A multi-faceted, umbrella view which considers many possibilities is needed, which specialists focusing on their areas
- Do we locate initiatives in one space, or broadly distribute them across the library (job seeker services, for example)
- Does the space meet the needs of our outreach programming?

With changes, building already had obsolescence by the time it opened. How to avoid this?

- Within 2 years of opening the building, one classroom converted to an iPad room “the Whale” (see next slide)
- City developed a media room in a study room, but much too small
- Need for a maker space to support both City and TCC
- Furniture wasn’t designed to be moved, despite creating large, flexible spaces (starting to wear); furniture doesn’t help with privacy—study carrels in high demand
- Beautiful café is not utilized well, problematic relationship with state vendor
- Major changes to furniture cannot be made inside a 5 year mark due to CIP funding

The WHALE

- Wireless hub of active library education
- November 2014, implementation spring 2015—alternate space, library school environment, started teaching in fall 2015
- Had leftover CIP funding, followed a library trend to establish
- Did significant literature review that showed success in other institutions; learned from the lessons/failures of others, particularly IT/AV
- Outcome: doesn't show a significant improvement in student learning, but allows more creative freedom for instructors
- Anecdotally: students more responsive to free space
- Upcoming article on the initiative; master's thesis on the WHALE by Melissa Moore

Title: "Chasing the White WHALE": A Case Study in Using iPads to Promote Active Learning

Authors: Alexandra Harrington & Garrison Libby

Journal: Internet Reference Services Quarterly

Likely publication date: November or December 2016

How do we assess the space for year 5? What data do we currently have?

- Door counts
- Instructional data
- Study room sign ups
- Calendar of outside events
- User feedbacks (i.e. complaint forms)
- Semi-regular satisfaction surveys by the City and the College
- Anecdotal evidence (what we see regularly)
- Literature reviews (what works in other places)
- What we'd like (library trends)

What we have isn't enough...what we need:

- Door counts of individual rooms/event headcounts
- Comparative instructional data
- Study room surveys/feedback
- Central building calendaring to track events, numbers, hours spent
- Event user feedback
- Faculty surveys of what they'd like to see

In Short, Qualitative Data

Still need to think about:

- Anecdotal evidence (what we see regularly)
- What we'd like (library trends)
- Library steering committee (advisors)

Regularly consider the literature, trends and return to the program

- As with all assessment, space assessment should be ongoing
- Consistent analysis of overall space, while considering trends in use, technology and pedagogies, and initiating new outreach/instructional programming
- Consider date constraints, fiscal years, new campus initiatives to see how these can be opportunities, are there grants to support changes?
- Try to build in assessment with each change so that you can validate your work

Bibliography

forthcoming

Questions?

Sarah Falls

Director, Joint-Use Library

sfalls@tcc.edu