

Spaces and Communities of Scholars

Moderated by Carol Mandel and Lucinda Covert-Vail

Participants in this session “brainstormed” new services and resources targeted at the space and community needs of graduate students. The following is a summary of the ideas generated by session participants.

What really works?

As we consider spaces for graduate students, it is not about “grad vs. undergrad”...rather we should think in terms of “quiet/scholarly spaces vs. social spaces.” We have a sense that learning support services for graduate students are not identical to the service needs of undergraduates. So we must identify services that might be shared by grads and undergrads, and distinguish these from those that might be more exclusively appropriate for graduate students.

Acquiring and characterizing spaces for graduate scholars:

1. Where we have branch libraries on campus, consider “repurposing” the branch facility to store collections. In this way, needed space for graduate student engagement can be created in main or other branches as needed.
2. Coordinate with other entities on campus who may have available spaces.
3. Determine if graduate students want their own (exclusive) space in the library. Grad spaces need to be tied to specific services.
4. Determine if they require the same services as provided, for example, in existing learning commons. We now have examples emerging in ARL libraries of spaces that are exclusively for the graduate student population.
5. Exclusive spaces provide the sense of community and commonality. Good examples may be found in business schools and law libraries. When creating spaces for graduate students, give special consideration to space adjacencies (there may be “logical layouts” to provide).
6. Provide spaces that reflect the work of specific disciplines.
7. Collaborate with others on campus to conceive and build new spaces for graduate students (example: library and student services). Are there opportunities for the library to have space (a presence) in other campus settings?
8. Facilitate sharing among graduate students in different disciplines (host convergent occasions to showcase brilliance across the university.)
9. We should be concerned about post-design assessment and evaluation. Our work never stops as we refine these specialty spaces to best complement the populations they serve.

Specific qualities:

- Ability to reserve a specific space online without staff mediation
- Presentation practice rooms
- Videoconference capability

- Advanced multimedia labs
- Potential to function as laboratory
- Multi-purpose, rather than exclusively defined, to serve more opportunities
- Furniture should be mobile, flexible, “on wheels” to suit the moment of use
- Quiet spaces for focused work and intensive scholarship
- Other spaces that are intellectually stimulating, energizing, and supportive
- Food available 24–7
- “Bullpens” with white boards
- Spaces intended for graduate students and faculty to mix
- Research commons for combined faculty and graduate student services
- Space as incubator for emerging research
- Carrels that are multi-purpose and multi-use
- Carrels in preferred locations/settings

Special assistance:

- Embedded librarian who can assist with coordinating graduate meetings
- Embedding librarians in science labs
- Library subject specialist and interdisciplinary teams
- Librarians on call/chat
- Dissertation research
- Bibliographic management services (skills training in discovery and management of information resources and data)
- Teaching/writing centers

Special services and spaces for:

- Events programming assistance
- Child care
- Performances
- Displays/exhibits of graduate student works
- Lunch series presentations featuring:
 - graduate student research (perhaps co-sponsored with VP for Research)
 - faculty research
 - emerging dissertations
 - opportunities to share book chapters and works-in-progress