

*Creating Inviting Spaces for Students:
Confronting Loyola's Campus Plan
for the Future*

Loyola University Sociology Club,
Student Life Working Group:

Christina Johnson

Mary Mack

Alexandra Manzella

Erna Dzafic

Lillian Santowski

Justin Gunderson

Courtney Charter

Senior writers: Alexandra Manzella and Mary Mack

Advisor: Dr. Talmadge Wright, Dept. of Sociology

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Department of Sociology
Loyola University Chicago
6525 N. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, Illinois 60626

<u>Table of Contents</u>	Page #
Introduction	3
Literature Review	3
Study Design	7
Data Analysis	7
Survey Methods	8
Current Social Spaces	8
Student Desires for the Future	14
Plans for Future Social Spaces	19
Conclusion	23
Bibliography	24

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Introduction

College is a time and place for students to learn and is dominated by intellectual pursuits. There is more to college than academics, however; the social aspect of college life is found to be equally as important in helping students attain the “college experience.” To help students truly gain a full “college experience,” therefore, universities should have spaces on campus which promote socialization among members of the campus community outside of a purely academic setting. Without spaces on campus which promote socialization among members of the campus community, students can be denied this well-rounded “college experience.” This study demonstrates the importance of social spaces on college campuses and devises how these areas should be constructed to promote a community on Loyola University Chicago’s campus and a more unified student body.

Literature Review

The college campus should be a place that creates an environment conducive to both the intellectual and social pursuits of its students. Nathan (2005), an anthropology professor, took a sabbatical from her position for a year to move into the dorms, attend classes and live as a freshman student at her university. During her time conducting this participant observation, Nathan realized that the classes were a very small part of what comprised the college experience for most students. The time with their friends, going out and partying, even time just hanging out and watching movies in someone’s dorm room, these were the moments that most students were primarily pursuing in their time in college. While they took classes and most did a majority of the reading and homework and attended a majority of the classes, the academics were not the only or even the most important part of college for most undergraduate students. This revelation concerning the objective for most students of what they hope to gain from their time in college should be

considered in how to create a campus environment which is a community and where the students want to spend their time.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a useful measure of how involved students are in academics and extra curricular activities, has been the subject of multiple articles. In one study by Rauf (2004) it was reported that the number of students who have to work to pay their tuition was at an all-time high with this pertaining to the situation of nearly half of all students. Hoover (2004) expanded upon this point by reporting that students who work on campus, participate in more extra curricular activities and prepare more for classes, are more likely to be self-reflective and to synthesize knowledge and different skills. He also found that over half of the respondents said that they do have serious conversations with fellow students on subjects such as politics and religion, however, many students still never talked to their professors about the readings they covered outside of class. These observations were mirrored in Nathan's experiences.

In an article which focused on the correlations discovered using the NSSE concerning the size of a school and the opinions of their students, "Lost in the Crowd" (2001-2), it was discovered that smaller colleges have more students who report feeling that they have a supportive campus environment. Over 60 percent of students at schools with less than 4,000 students reported feeling their campus environment is supportive, while less than 52 percent of students at schools with over 15,000 students felt the same. Students at smaller schools are also more likely to say they participate in active and collaborative learning and interact more with faculty outside of class. Feeling that a campus environment is hostile, according to Mounts (2004), also correlates with students being less likely to feel a sense of belonging. Loneliness and anxiety are also likely to coincide with feeling like an outsider on campus.

Mitchell's (1997) work focused on determining what first year students thought of their university. In asking students which of the spaces within the university they hoped to become familiar with, recreational spaces and the student union were the places most often cited by the respondents. These are spaces where students can hang out with one another and are often thought of as major centers for socializing on-campus. It was found that nearly one-fifth of the students surveyed here said that they use the student

union in between their classes, showing this space was utilized by students throughout the day. Students who were more familiar with and used more of the facilities on-campus were also found to be more likely to return than those who did not, lending an economic motivation for schools to create spaces that are enjoyed and therefore used by their students.

The role of the campus in creating a community within a university was studied by McDonald (2002), stressing the need for places which cater to the wide variety of needs expressed by all members of the university: “A collegiate community must be more than a collection of buildings connected only by steam lines and fiber optic cables. It must be a set of relationships that recognize and celebrate a shared vision of purpose and values” (McDonald 2002:8). He discusses the need for spaces which accommodate both public and private interests, the need for solitude and intimacy, early mornings and late nights, harmony and conflict, silence and conversation (McDonald 2002:7). This vision of a university in need of diverse spaces serving a variety of needs is one which must be addressed in the physical construction of the buildings and campus.

Architecture and the ways in which buildings can be made more welcoming and comfortable for those who use the spaces is the subject of a study done by Alexander (1977). “People enjoy mixing in public, in parks, squares, along promenades and avenues, in street cafes. The preconditions seem to be: the setting gives you the right to be there, by custom; there are a few things to do that are part of the scene, almost ritual: reading the newspaper, strolling, nursing a beer, playing catch; and people feel safe enough to relax, nod at each other, perhaps even meet” (Alexander 1977:437). Clearly spaces serve more than simply a physical function; the design of a space can create an atmosphere which influences the actions of those who pass through or linger in said space. “It offers a setting for discussion of great spirit – talks, two-bit lectures, half-public, half-private, learning, exchange of thought” (Alexander 1977:438). Allowing a variety of activities to take place in a single space is an important goal for designs of social spaces.

To allow people with different agendas to all simultaneously utilize a common space, multiple uses must be considered in the design process. “People want to be together; but at the same time they want the opportunity for some small amount of

privacy, without giving up community” (Alexander 1977:831). The need for alcoves and warm light are two of the essential elements in making a space comfortable and welcoming. A common area should be located where people pass by frequently, not cutting through, but not having to make a special trip to get there either. A common area that will be used will be a “well defined area, with paths running past it, not cutting through it, and placed so that people naturally pass by it, stop and talk, lean on the backs of chairs, gradually sit down, move position, get up again” (Alexander 1977:858). People lead busy lives, therefore, “the goal-oriented activity of coming and going” must have “a chance to turn gradually into something more relaxed” (Alexander 1977:600). Because people are all different, “no homogenous room, of homogenous height, can serve a group of people well. To give a group a chance to be together, as a group, a room must also give them the chance to be alone, in one’s and two’s in the same space” (Alexander 1977:829). The grouping of furniture can help in this effort; likewise, the type of furniture can also have an impact on the dynamics of a space.

The hazards of prefabricated materials and pane glass windows are also explored by Alexander. “A setting that is full of chairs, all slightly different, immediately creates an atmosphere which supports rich experience; a setting which contains chairs that are all alike puts a subtle straight jacket on experience” (Alexander 1977:1159). By expressing variety in the furnishings a variety of people are given the opportunity to make a space unique to their own desires and purpose for being there. “Smooth hard walls made of prefabricated panels, concrete, gypsum, steel, aluminum or glass always stay impersonal and dead” (Alexander 1977:909). A space should be infused with life through the use of softer fabrics and warm hues. “In order to make a room comfortable, you must use a collection of colors which together with the sources of light and the reflecting surfaces outside the room, combine to make the reflected light which exists in the middle of the room warm” (Alexander 1977:1154).

Whether the light is artificial or natural, the amount of light and how it is being filtered into a room must be considered by those designing the space. “It is uncomfortable to feel that there is nothing between you and the outside, when in fact you are inside a building. It is the nature of windows to give you a relationship to the outside and at the same time to give a sense of enclosure” (Alexander 1977:1110). By examining

the various factors found to be conducive to creating comfortable spaces one can better formulate ideas about how to construct spaces within a university that will feel welcoming to the students.

Study Design

This study has both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. The quantitative study was conducted through a 10 minute survey administered to 252 Loyola students at various locations around campus. The survey instrument was established on line through a secure data link and students were invited to take the survey at several laptops organized in different building settings. This convenience sample, while not random contains a sufficient diversity of data to give an excellent sense of student perception of campus space, as we shall see in the data analysis. The intent of this study is first and foremost to determine what changes can be made to improve campus space, yo make the college experience more enjoyable and to accurately assess student attitudes about Loyola's campus spaces. The qualitative aspect of this study will consists in follow up semi-structured interviews with select students to explore those patterns which emerged in the survey data. We expect that this part of the study will be accomplished during the Fall 2006 semester.

Data Analysis

The sample population that we are surveyed is a convenience sample of Loyola University Chicago students. We set up tables in various areas around campus, including in the student union and the library, hoping that we would be able to capture a representative cross-section of the student population which includes students of all ages and who live on-campus, near campus and commuters. As is shown in Table 1 ($N=252$), the demographics of the sample that we ended up with showed a majority of upperclassmen, with just over a third of the respondents categorized as freshmen or sophomores; 59 percent of respondents were female and 41 percent male; 40 percent lived on campus, 44 percent lived off campus but within walking distance to Loyola and 16 percent were commuter students.

Table 1, *Class Status Demographics*

Year in School	Percentage
Freshman	17%
Sophomores	17%
Juniors	34%
Seniors	30%
Graduate Students	2%
Total	100%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

Survey Methods

We administered online surveys which we designed based on questions which emerged from informal discussions with our fellow students concerning the current social spaces available on Loyola's campus and what would be enjoyed and utilized if it were added to the current campus. We attracted students to take our survey through fliers and posters advertising the survey and set up tables in the current student union and library. We obtained signed informed consent forms from each participant describing to them the purpose of our research of hoping to create a more socially desirable university and assuring them that their information would not be misused in any manner and their identity would remain confidential.

Current Social Spaces

We began our survey with the goal of discovering what student opinions were surrounding the spaces already available on Loyola University's Chicago campus. We discovered that plans had been underway for a couple of years already to overhaul the campus in the attempt to improve the campus for the students. Feeling that this was a worthwhile objective and improvements were needed, we set up a meeting with the Vice

President for Operations to find out just what was in the plans. What was discovered was that many of the plans started out with the right objectives to address the problems of insufficient space for students, but the ways they were attempting to address these problems did not do so satisfactorily. Later in the semester members of our group attended a meeting open to the entire community with Chicago's city alderman for the area to discuss the plans for the next step to be taken in the plans which call for a building to be constructed on the lawn next to the lake, between the library and chapel. This lawn is known as the Jesuit Residence, or Jes Res, Lawn, and is a loved and much-used space on campus when weather permits for outdoor time. Disagreements with the plans to eliminate this open space were expressed by nearly all attendees to this meeting.

While the University was ready to move forward on their plans, the alderman instructed everyone that any grievances could be brought up at a public hearing of the city council, which still had to approve the plans since the area falls into space protected by the Lakefront Protection Ordinance. We attended this meeting a few weeks later and spoke to the city council members there, and while the University was still granted approval to move ahead on their building plans, it was recommended that they slow down with their progress and listen to what the students and residents in the area wanted to see. In our appeal, that the students did not want to see the plans, as they had originally been conceived, carried out, we used results from our survey to support these claims.

In the survey students were asked to look at the campus as a whole and rate the social spaces from one to four, corresponding to labels of poor, fair, good and excellent. As can be seen in Table 2, the results showed that over three-quarters of the students reported the campus social spaces as either poor or fair, while less than two percent rated

them as excellent. When asked to report their own level of comfort on campus, nearly sixty percent said they were only somewhat comfortable, while an additional ten percent reported being not at all comfortable. While only thirty percent of the students said that they scheduled their classes to spend as little time as possible on campus, nearly half said that they leave campus during a break between classes and over half said that there was not some place comfortable to go on campus during a break.

Table 2, *Current Social Spaces at Loyola*

Rating	Percentage
Poor	18.0%
Fair	59.4%
Good	21.2%
Excellent	1.4%
Total	100%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

Almost sixty percent of students said that they felt they could not meet and connect with new people in the social spaces on campus, clearly showing that the lack of physical spaces can impact the larger atmosphere of a campus and the social lives of the students there. Over seventy percent of the students reported that they do not hang out in the current student union, *Centennial Forum Student Union (CFSU)*. This lack of a central social space within the campus is a detriment to the students and this deficiency comes through in other areas of life on campus; over sixty percent of students said that they end up meeting and socializing with their friends in the study areas on campus, thus creating distractions by converting the study spaces into social spaces.

When students were asked to rate specific spaces on campus, the overall response for most spaces was a rating of fair. Only one space was rated as excellent by a majority of the students; this space was the Jesuit Residence Lawn, an area which is scheduled to

be eliminated in the first stage of the refashioning of the campus. The library and student union, two spaces often thought of as the heart of a college campus, both received overall ratings of fair, with nearly fifty percent rating CFSU below good and over fifty percent doing so for Cudahy Library.

Students were also asked to examine CFSU more in depth, since the student union is generally thought of as the social center of a university. Students were asked to examine the hours, lighting, flooring, furniture, privacy, activities and window views afforded them by the current student union. What was discovered was that the hours and lighting of CFSU were deemed sufficient, with the majority of students rating them as good; flooring and activities were rated as fair by the majority, while window views, privacy and furniture all received poor ratings by most of the students. With no aspect of CFSU receiving even a twenty percent rating of excellent, and most receiving well below ten percent, it is clear that major changes must be made for the student union to become a space that is truly created for the students and used by the students.

One surprising relationship that was found showed upperclassmen to be less comfortable on campus than underclassmen, as can be seen in Table 3. This means that rather than learning where they fit in and growing more at ease with their campus as time goes on, students actually feel more alienated and less welcome at their own university the longer they are there. Of course, this factor is typical on many campuses where Senior and Junior students may be more oriented towards leaving the campus for a future occupation than with the current campus atmosphere. Hence, it is important to rate the desires of Freshman and Sophomore students.

Table 3, *Comfort On Campus by Class Status*

How Comfortable Do You Feel On Campus?	Year in School				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
Not At All	7.9%	5.3%	7.6%	14.9%	7.9%
Somewhat	50.0%	36.8%	53.8%	47.8%	52.8%
A Lot	26.3%	42.1%	33.3%	29.9%	29.4%
Very Much	15.8%	15.8%	5.1%	7.4%	9.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

This is a problem that can affect more than just the lives of the students; it can have effects on the welfare of the university itself. If students do not develop a certain level of comfort and an affinity with their campus, they are much more likely to transfer to a different school. Even if they do not do this and trudge through to graduate from Loyola, if they do not have fond memories—memories which many may occur off campus instead of on campus—of life at school to look back on, they are much less likely to contribute, financially, as alumni. This lack of financial support from former students can prove detrimental to future generations of Loyola students and can imperil the fate of the University, especially since the millions of dollars that the University intends to spend is to be used to make the space what they the administration of the university—and not the students—wants it to be to attract future students.

Students who are less comfortable in the spaces on campus were also less likely to say that they spent any time studying in Cudahy Library, the main library for the Lakeshore campus. This demonstrates how a dearth of comfortable social spaces for students can also impact the academics of these students.

While most students (76.6 percent) do spend at least a couple hours a week studying in Cudahy Library, there is a clear correlation in the numbers of people who never study in Cudahy Library and those who are not comfortable in the spaces provided by Loyola. A university is an institution of learning above all else and its library should be the area most utilized by the students; when a sense of discomfort on campus leads to students not using even the library, the academic environment is then being threatened.

Another way it can be seen that comfort on campus has an effect on the intellectual atmosphere of a university is in how students' comfort on campus can be seen to correlate with whether or not they schedule their classes to spend as little time as possible on campus (Table 4).

Table 4, *Schedule Classes for Little Time On Campus by Comfort On Campus*

Schedule Classes for Little Time On Campus?	How Comfortable Do You Feel On Campus?				
	Not At All	Somewhat	A Lot	Very Much	Total
Yes	40.9%	40.4%	21.4%	5.0%	27%
No	59.1%	59.6%	78.6%	95.0%	73%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

Classes should be chosen based on intellectual interests, not on scheduling times. By providing students with more comfortable spaces on campus, they would be more likely to schedule classes based not on the class time, but on the class itself.

The current spaces available on Loyola's Lakeshore Campus are clearly not meeting the needs of the students. The inconsistencies between what areas the students use and what areas the administration feels need to be changed are a telling sign of the lack of communication between these two parties. The fact that the campus is not

meeting the needs and desires of the students affects them not only socially but academically as well, adding an extra dimension of importance to the changes to be made in the effort to improve the campus.

Student Desires for the Future

In hoping to make suggestions for improvements to accompany our findings of dissatisfaction, we compiled a list of fifteen possible areas or services which we thought might be appreciated by students and asked the students to rank how much they would like to see them available on Loyola's campus. Only two of these choices received a modal response lower than "Very Much," the highest option given. The two most popular options were to be able to use Rambler Bucks/Dining Dollars at off-campus establishments and to have a 24-hour café/coffee shop on campus. 60.2 percent of the students said they would like to use their Rambler Bucks, currently only accepted in the student cafeterias, off-campus very much, while an additional 19.9 percent rated their desire the second highest, "A Lot". For the 24-hour café/coffee shop, 53.8 percent responded with a desire of very much and 26.5 percent said they would like to see one a lot. For both of these spaces, over 80 percent of the students responded in the top two category ratings of desirability.

Table 5, *Spaces and Services Desired By Students*

	Not At All	Somewhat	A Lot	Very Much	Total
24-hour café/coffee shop	4.0%	15.7%	26.5%	53.8%	100.00%
Weekend Activities	5.4%	32.6%	29.0%	33.0%	100.00%
Music/Performance Area	4.1%	27.7%	29.5%	38.6%	100.00%
Farmer’s Market on Halas Field	17.6%	29.3%	22.5%	30.6%	100.00%
More Social Spaces with Views	3.2%	20.7%	32.9%	43.2%	100.00%
Rambler Bucks used off-campus	5.4%	14.5%	19.9%	60.2%	100.00%
More Computer Labs	4.9%	35.0%	28.3%	31.8%	100.00%
More Study Spaces	2.7%	26.9%	30.0%	40.4%	100.00%
Improved 8-ride	7.9%	26.5%	21.4%	44.2%	100.00%
Student art displays	8.2%	26.8%	29.5%	35.5%	100.00%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

Table 5 shows the top ten suggestions which were wanted by students and their degree of desirability.

The space which received one of the smaller percentages of high desirability was a farmer’s market on Halas Field, located in the center of the campus. Nearly 47 percent of the students said that they would like to see this not at all or only somewhat, meaning that still over 50 percent rated it with “a lot” or “very much” desirability. While students were taking the survey, however, the farmer’s market received the most vocal response with people seeing that suggestion and commenting to the surveyors how great that would be, one student even leaving the phone number of the person in charge of farmer’s markets for the area for us to contact him if this proved to be something wanted by the students. Clearly, although this was not one of the spaces which was overwhelmingly

desired by the students. Looking just at the numbers, those who did hope to see a farmer's market seemed likely to actually frequent one.

It is known that sometimes people say they would like to see something, but if actually given what they claim to desire, their use of said option is sporadic, perhaps making their expressed desire less valuable. In the hopes of judging how often new spaces would be used, we asked the students to project how often they would use a 24-hour café/coffee shop and additional library space, if either were to be offered by Loyola. The responses indicated that people would be likely to use both of these spaces extensively, with the modal response for each predicting weekly use. 37.9 percent of the students said they would use a 24-hour café/coffee shop daily and another 42 percent said they would use it weekly; only 7.3 percent said they would never use it. For additional library space, 31.5 percent said they would take advantage of additional library space daily and 40.1 percent said they would use it weekly. Libraries are often viewed as one of the most vital parts of a university, and the fact that over 93 percent of the students said that they would not only like to see, but would also use additional library space exposes a current deficiency in Loyola's campus, not just socially, but also in creating an atmosphere conducive to furthering academic and intellectual pursuits.

One prediction of where distinctions may be found between what various groups of students wanted to see available was between where students lived and something that may be thought to benefit only those living on campus. It is a requirement for students to purchase Rambler Bucks or Dining Dollars if they live in on-campus housing, while other students have the option to buy them, but are not required to do so. Due to this distinction, it was expected that the relationship between residence and the desirability of

using Rambler Bucks at off-campus establishments would show significant differences between the wishes of on-campus students and everyone else. Surprisingly, the relationship was not found to be very strong at all and, as is seen in Table 6, over 60 percent of commuter students and nearly 80 percent of students living off-campus said they would like to see this offered either a lot or very much.

Table 6, *Desirability of Rambler Bucks Off-Campus by Residence*

How Much Would You Like To Use Rambler Bucks Off-Campus?	Residence			
	On-Campus	Off-Campus	Commuter	Total
Not At All	2.2%	6.3%	11.8%	5.4%
Somewhat	9.9%	14.6%	26.5%	14.5%
A Lot	16.5%	19.8%	29.4%	19.9%
Very Much	71.4%	59.4%	32.4%	60.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

This shows that something such as Rambler Bucks and Dining Dollars, which are inextricably tied to a student’s residence, still receives comparable reported desirability from students of all residences.

Another suggested improvement that was thought might be closely tied to where a student lived was the desire for improved 8-ride service which picks students up and drops them off at various locations within a one-mile radius of campus. It was expected that students who live on-campus may have less need to be picked up at various locations, since it would be likely that the majority of their friends would also live on-campus, while off-campus students usually live further away from the school and are more spread out from their friends’ homes. Table 7 shows that, regardless of residence, improvements in 8-Ride service would be desired by a majority of the students. Even

commuter students, the lowest raters for this suggestion by far, 50 percent saying that they would like to see this service improved “a lot” or “very much.”

Table 7, *Desire for Improved 8-Ride Service by Residence*

How Much Would You Like Improved 8-Ride Service?	Residence			
	On-Campus	Off-Campus	Commuter	Total
Not At All	10.1%	3.2%	15.6%	7.9%
Somewhat	19.1%	30.9%	34.4%	26.5%
A Lot	24.7%	19.1%	18.7%	21.4%
Very Much	46.1%	46.8%	31.3%	44.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

These results suggest that there could be greater than expected similarities in the desires of students across the board. With regards to 8-Ride, specifically, the fact that students see the need for changes to be made, raises the issue of whether they would be more likely to use it if it was improved. Since this is a service provided mainly for the safety of the students, it should be a top priority of the administration to ensure that it serves the students needs and is as well-run as possible.

When looking at how often students would use additional library space it was found that, while expected use could not be well-predicted based upon class year (Table 8), freshmen were the least likely to report expecting to use additional library space, though still nearly 57 percent of freshmen reported that they would use it at least once a week.

Table 8, *Frequency One Would Use Additional Library Space by Year In School*

<i>How often would you use additional library space?</i>	<i>Year in School</i>					
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Grad Student	Total
Daily	21.6%	34.2%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	31.5%
Weekly	35.1%	42.1%	42.3%	40.9%	0.0%	40.1%
Once or twice a month	13.5%	18.4%	14.2%	12.1%	33.3%	14.4%
Only at finals	18.9%	2.6%	7.7%	4.5%	0.0%	7.7%
Never	10.8%	2.6%	2.6%	9.1%	33.3%	6.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Data from the Student Life Working Group Survey, 2006

Linking these results back to the findings that students feel less comfortable on campus as they advance in years as well as the fact that students who are less comfortable on campus are less likely to study at the existing library, it is clear that the students would like to use on-campus spaces provided for studying. It is the duty of the University to provide ample spaces to facilitate learning, and this is not currently being done.

Plans for Future Social Spaces:

During our meetings early on, we had the opportunity to study the plans for the interior of the proposed Information Commons building which is planned as an extension to the library that will house additional computers and offer a more informal setting for students to study. While this space is to be an addition to the library, it is intended to have a more casual atmosphere, allowing food and drinks as well as socializing among students. In our examination of these plans, we found merit in some of their proposals, but also found many aspects which could be improved to better serve the needs which the students need addressed in this new space.

To address our concerns with the proposed plans, we created a critique of these plans, using the work of William Whyte and Christopher Alexander to provide supporting evidence to our suggested changes. This critique will be published on our WEB site at a later time (although a preliminary version was presented to the Dean of Libraries, responsible for the interior design of the new Information Commons). Our main concerns dealt with an insufficient amount of informal seating available in the supposedly casual lounge areas around the windows and café. Though this was presented as space created for the comfort of the students, there were many more large tables and stand-up computer terminals than comfortable chairs or small tables. There was also no seating available in the café area. The café which had been set in a separate area, away from the central activity of the information commons, was conceived as central to the new building, with a proposal to switch its location with that of the information desk, located in the center of the first floor.

During the meetings about the future of the campus, we met with the Dean of Libraries, and he conveyed his hope that we would be able to work together to create a space that would meet the needs of the students and accomplish its goals of providing a functional social as well as intellectual atmosphere through its architectural design and layout. To communicate our criticisms and offer solutions to the problems we saw, we created and passed our critique on to him. Our main suggestions included adding more informal seating, especially around the windows to best take advantage of the lake and quad views which this building will afford its users. Dividing the seating spaces into smaller areas rather than all being in one large open space to increase privacy and thereby increase the comfort of the students in these spaces was another proposed change.

Reducing the size of tables and the number of stand-up computer terminals were suggested because we did not feel that these would be adequately utilized by the students if implemented as originally proposed. Carpeting and a fireplace were proposed additions to the space to increase the coziness of the atmosphere. We also pushed to have more lawn space available for the students in the absence of the Jes Res lawn area.

While not all of our suggestions were met with agreement, we were able to gain some improvements to the plans which we believe will help the new space successfully fulfill more of the functions which were said to be the goals of the information commons. The café was unable to be moved due to problems with relocating the infrastructure; however, many of our other chief concerns were addressed in the changes made. Stand-up computer stations and large group study tables were reduced in number in favor of an increased amount of lounge seating, informal gathering spaces and casual group seating. The majority of the increased lounge seating will be located near the windows to embrace the views on both the lake and quad sides of the building. The furniture was also moved to improve the flow of people, making access to the classrooms easier and not opening the gathering areas to people cutting through the middle of them which would greatly reduce any privacy or intimate feeling created in these spaces.

Though not all of our proposals were able to be adopted into the plans for the information commons, it is encouraging that our opinions and the supporting evidence for them were listened to and taken into consideration. It is our hope that the administration will continue to solicit and accept the outlooks and suggestions of the students when creating plans for the future. We believe that the Information Commons will be a better building due to the changes made and we hope that it will serve some of

the needs not currently being addressed by the University which were identified by students in our surveys.

With the limited time afforded us in only one semester of research, we were unable to complete interviews that we had originally hoped to use to gain a more in-depth perception of how students view their campus. We hope to be able to continue this study into the next school year and to be able to conduct some interviews then. It is also difficult to publicize the findings of our work in a timely fashion that can have an effect on the work to be done to the University. Since it was the end of the school year and people were focused on finishing up classes and getting to summer break, they were less apt to notice reports in the school newspaper or reports published on the internet. With work scheduled to begin on the Information Commons over the summer, getting attention from the student body and finding people to work on getting changes made to the building before construction begins was a race against the clock.

Through the examination of Nathan's study about undergraduate life on campus, we were able to identify that the social life of a college student is often equally, if not more important to him or her than the classes he or she takes. Whether this view of college is approved of or not by university administrators, this is a fact about how college life is approached today. With students regarding the social side of their time in college as on par with the academics in import, universities must also examine the social atmosphere that their school affords to its students. Both Mitchell and McDonald addressed the importance of the campus in fostering a community among the students on said campus and the influence of physical spaces in creating a specific atmosphere was demonstrated in Alexander's work. Using this background we were able to formulate a

survey which found that students at Loyola University Chicago's Lakeshore Campus are not currently satisfied with the spaces that are available to them. Suggestions for improvements that could be made to the campus were also collected in this survey. Armed with the results from our survey, we formulated a critique and were able to see some of our suggestions integrated into the plans for the new information commons. Hopefully the administration will continue to work more closely with the students in all of their plans for the overhaul of the campus in the coming years.

Conclusion

The social spaces at a university should not merely be afterthoughts by the administration; these are integral spaces that help to define the intellectual as well as social atmosphere of a university. The community of students at a university is an essential part of what makes college such an important time in the lives of most people, and without social spaces which encourage this development of community, students are being cheated out of one of the most rewarding aspects of their time in college. To neglect to give the students spaces in which they can be comfortable, a university risks losing financing both through current students transferring to other universities and through alumni who do not feel a connection to their alma mater and, consequently, feel no obligation to give contributions. To discover what the spaces are that students value or desire, the administration must speak to the students themselves, not just to committees of architects, and hand picked student representatives. While the students who are present at a university now will be gone in five years, it is these students who the administration must consult because they are the experts in life on campus and it is only with their help

that future generations will inherit a campus that they can fully embrace and enjoy all that Loyola University Chicago's Lakeshore Campus has to offer.

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