

Learning Spaces Collaboratory Roundtable
Spring 2016: Focusing on the Future of Planning Learning Spaces
Boston University

Driving Questions

1. What are the beneficial impacts/ synergies of blending library and campus center programs?
2. Can a mixed-use building save money and space by capitalizing on those impacts/synergies?
3. Do these programmatic overlaps intensify the use of the building? Is there increased use of the library by more diverse groups?
4. Can learning spaces be shared effectively between departments and programs?
5. What is the right balance of food and social space to animate learning spaces?
6. Do adjacent outdoor terraces and porches really enhance learning spaces in temperate climates?

An Ambitious Transformation

Young Harris College is a private college located in the remarkable mountain setting of north Georgia. In 2008, YHC was awarded four-year status as part of an ambitious plan to expand its offerings, double its student body, and emerge as a leading, regional liberal arts college.

The centerpiece of this new program is the 125,000sf Campus Center, designed to catapult the student experience into the 21st century. The Center is the social and intellectual heart of campus.

Rich Mix of Uses

The Campus Center connects four distinct areas: a 60,000sf multi-purpose student center, an expanded dining hall boasting a wide variety of food stations, a 350-seat, versatile event facility, and a 40,000sf library and learning commons.

Planning Process

The planning process brought together a cross-section of the community including an engaged faculty and a diverse group of student leaders and learners. The design team fabricated programmatic “game pieces” to use in a series of hands-on exercises—especially designed to find the overlaps and synergies between uses—which led to a series of combined active classroom and group study spaces shared by both the Campus Center and the Library.

This approach led to an innovative solution where the 24-hour zone of the Library feeds off of the Campus Commons with the Bistro platform of the dining hall available for after-hours use. Two academic meeting rooms are strategically located off of the upper commons for open and easy access by faculty and students when scheduled—and are also immediately adjacent to the Library’s second-level.





Campus Commons: View from Library Entry with Dining / Bistro to right and Campus Porch above



Campus Porch with Commons below / Academic Meeting Classrooms to the left



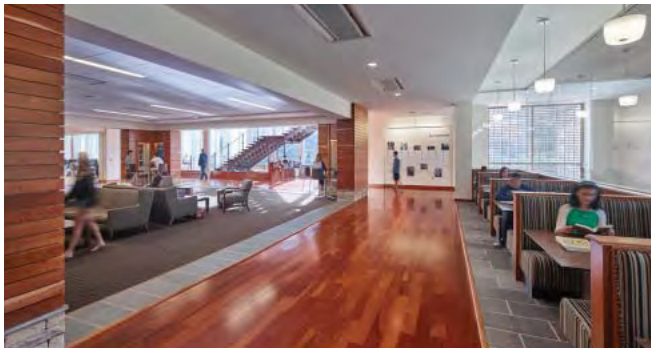
Terrace at Library Entry / Commons Porch

When it comes to spaces for informal social gathering and study, the modern campus library, student union, and dining hall all share remarkable similarities. Each building type promotes interaction and collaboration in a variety of settings, encourages students to meet, interact, and learn, all with access to technology—while being flexible, adaptable, and responsive to rapidly changing digital resources.

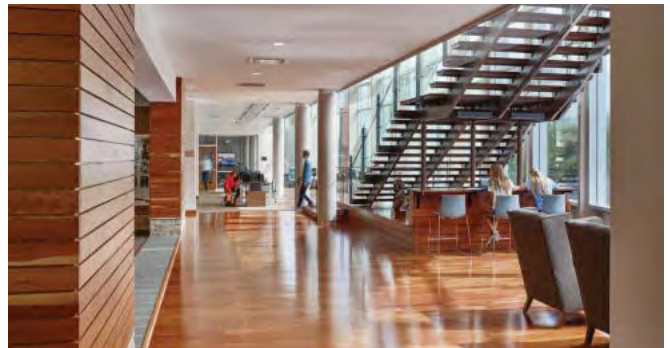




Library: Quiet Study Attic with mountain views on the Third Floor



Library: Entry and 24-Hour Zone off of Campus Commons



Library: Bay Window Study beneath Stair / Group Study



Late Night study in the Library 24-Hour Zone



Student Organizations: Activity Loft

Co-locating and cross-training library, campus life, and student development staff brings program synergy to life. This overlap translates into a more efficient building—with fewer spaces than if built separately—concentrating and amplifying the sense of activity around learning outside the classroom. In fact, the number of students using the library has increased by nearly 80% since opening.

