

# The University of Illinois at Chicago Experience with Project Oasis, an Informal Learning Space Program

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4:00 p.m. EST





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# University of Illinois at Chicago



## Public research university

- Chicago's largest university with 27,580 students
  - 16,911 Undergrad
- One of most diverse student bodies in Chicago--commuter and residential
- Rich diversity of programs & spaces



# **UIC Project Oasis**

## **Session Learning Outcomes**

- Gain insights on the role informal learning spaces (ILS) play in enhancing students' collegiate experience
- Understand the 'kit of parts' used to create a common language for an ILS and how each design is tweaked to make it unique
- Explore metrics used to measure the success of an ILS's.
- Learn how to create and sustain an informal learning space program, with internal and external support.



# Office of Campus Learning Environments



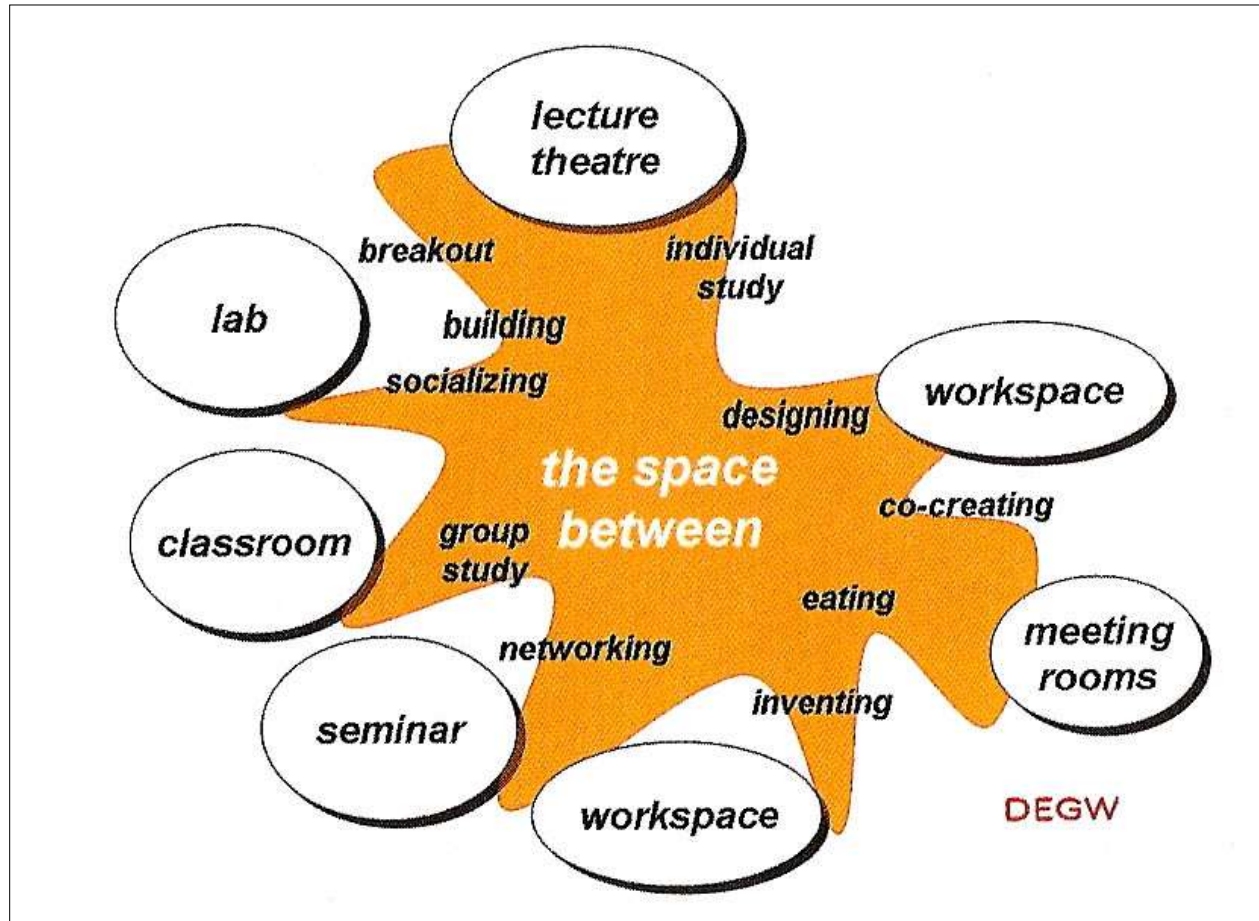
## What we do:

- Represent Provost's Office on multi-college learning space projects
- Serve as the point persons for discussions and decisions about all common-use formal and informal learning spaces across campus
- Have fun!



# Why Project Oasis?

## Learning Happens Everywhere



# Why Project Oasis?

## Impact of ILS on Learning



### ILS Matter to Learning:

- They provide opportunities for individual reflection
- They provide opportunities for community building and peer-to-peer learning
- There is no “one size fits all” approach



# Why We Started an Informal Learning Space (ILS) Program



- Existing spaces weren't serving learners
- No unit responsible for existing spaces



# Why an Informal Learning Space (ILS) Program



- As learning is an institutional priority, all learning spaces need to be recognized as a priority.
- As learning spaces are an investment in the institutional future, they need to be shaped by the community.



# How We Got Here



## Learned how to:

- Find Oasis space candidates
- Build campus partnerships
- Secure support
- Start small
- Prototype
- Monitor success



# Where we are now



- Wide distribution of Oases
- Recognized brand
- Senior administration support
- Integrated into project planning
- Broad funding base, internal and external
- Integral part of student life

# Where we are now

**News**

## Peace and quiet, pre-finals

[\[print version\]](#) [\[email article\]](#) [ShareThis](#)



**11/14/12**

[UIC News contributor](#)

**The Port Center in University Hall is among several comfortable lounges where students can relax or do work, says blogger Mike Queroz.**

*Photo: Alex Rauch*





# Questions?

***Next: Adolescence and Kit of Parts***



# Golden Opportunity: Transforming Under-utilized Space



**Before**



**After**

# History – Adolescence



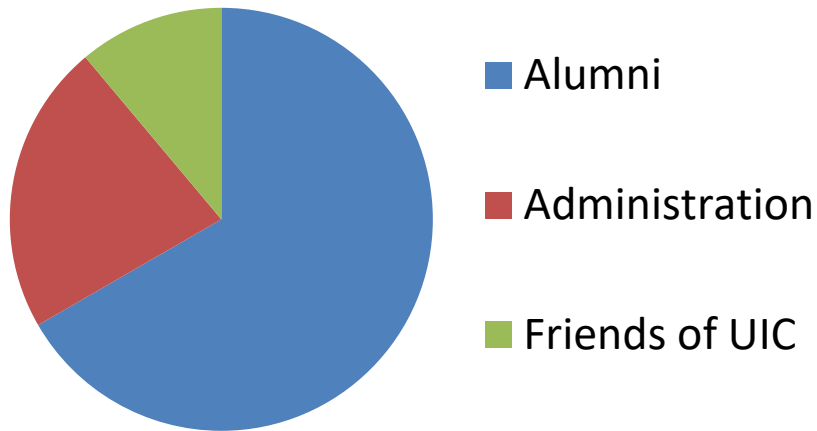
## Moving to legitimize our ILS program

- Secure Provost matching funds
- Solicit donors through Development Office

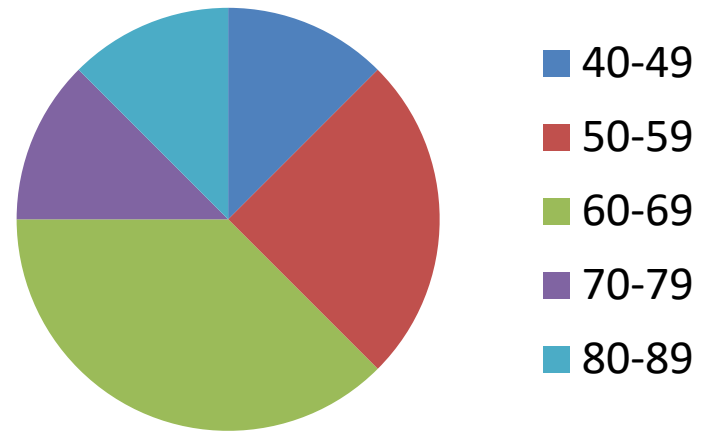


# Major Gifts Donor Profile

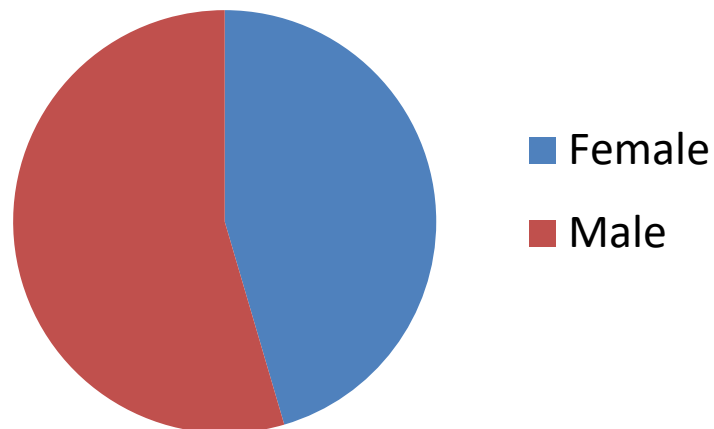
**Who?**



**Age**



**Gender**





# History – Adolescence



## Develop concepts

- “Wish list” of potential Oases
- Artistic renderings

## Broaden funding opportunities

- Bi-annual giving campaign
- Nurture internal sources

## Maintain (and assess) spaces.

# Key Design Criteria



## **Location, location, location**

- Proximity to formal learning spaces
- On student's path of travel

## **To see and be seen**

- Learning involves social interaction

## **Variety is the spice of life**

- Facilitate choice

# Kit of Parts

## Standard Design Features:

- **Seating**
  - Comfort & Variety
- **Finishes**
  - Vibrant
- **Lighting**
  - Ambient & Task
- **Acoustics**
- **Power outlets**
- **Artwork by UIC students**
- **Plants**





# Kit of Parts





# Specialty Design Features



## Unique Features:

- Food and Drink
- Technology
- Types of Art Installations
- Learning Center designation



# Specialty Design Features



# Specialty Design Features

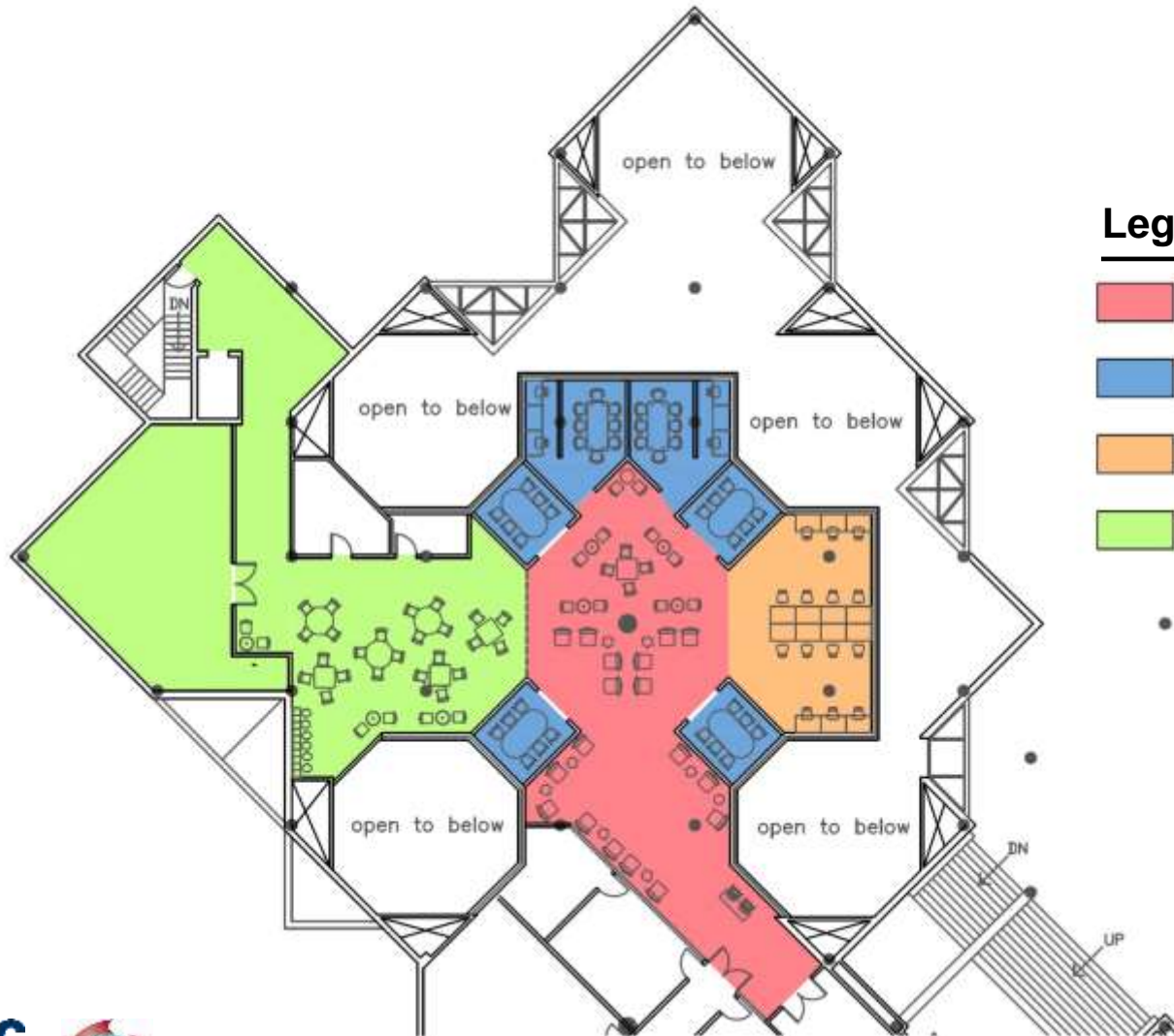


# Specialty Design Features





# Specialty Design Features



## Legend

- Informal Seating
- Tutoring Spaces
- Computer Stations
- Dining Services

**Science Learning Center**



# Specialty Design Features



# Questions

***Next: Assessment, Lessons, and the Future***



# Donor Feedback



- Informal interviews
- Digital storytelling



# Donor Video

*"This is going to be an opportunity for you to have a very special interaction with the University. And, you are going to discover through that process wonderful people. You are going to become increasingly dedicated, devoted to this campus through the experience. I can't think of a more worthwhile cause."*



# Donor Perspective

*"I think it will be great for relationships; it will give students an opportunity to meet with professors, with a lot of pressure taken off by not being in the classroom."*

*"I have very vivid memories of sitting on the floors in between classes. This is a nice way to spend some money that would have an immediate impact."*

# Assessment/Feedback Methods

## DIGITAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Office of Campus Learning Environments – Project Oasis



Category (Good or Potential Oasis)	Good
Picture # (for example, if the digital camera assigns a specific ID number)	1
Your Name	UIC Student
Subject/Title	Good Oasis (Light)
Location/Date/Time	Lecture Center A
Narrative (please elaborate on what we are looking at or what point you are trying to make with the picture)	I started looking at the good oases first and it wasn't that difficult to come up with things I liked. At this one the most impressive feature was the lighting. There is a ton of natural light available here, but even on rainy days, the lighting provided overhead still provides a great atmosphere for relaxing or studying.

Oasis video contest

Digital assessment  
(camera) project

Surveys and informal  
interviews

# Oasis Video Contest



- **Marketing**
  - Students marketing to students
- **Offering incentives**
- **Open parameters**
  - Wide range of submissions
- **Posting best videos**







## Student Video

*“The purpose of providing students with a place to study, relax or hang out with friends is a critical component of the overall college experience . . .”*

# Student's Perspective

## Why are the Oases important?

- Refuge from the hustle and bustle of the school and Chicago as a whole
- Great places to rest for commuters
  - Many Oases within close proximity to commuter stops
- Place to do last minute work before class
- Excellent meeting places for group study
- Location to sit and connect to wireless



# Digital Assessment (Camera Project)



**Student Identified Potential Oases**

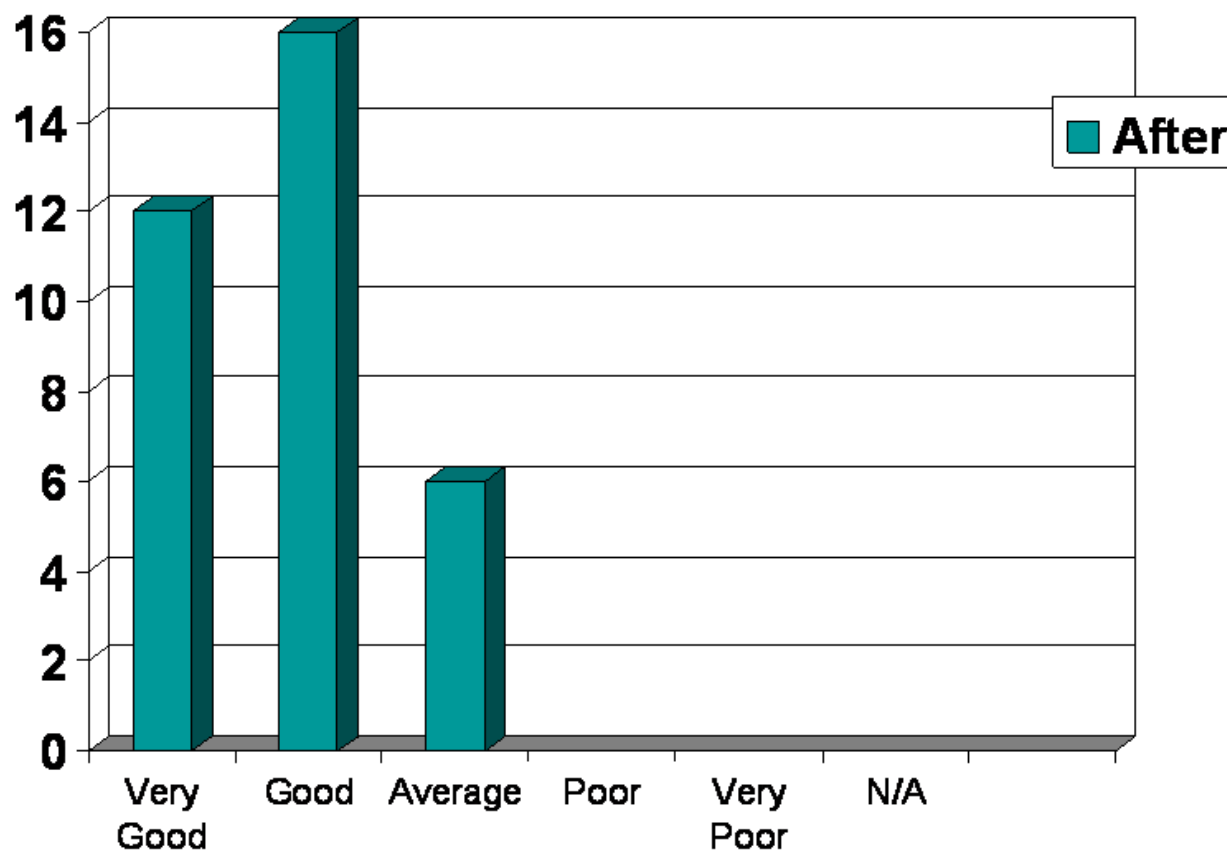


# Survey Results

Lecture Center A  
Oasis

How would you rate the comfort of the furniture in  
this Oasis/Student Lounge?

*Number of  
Respondents*





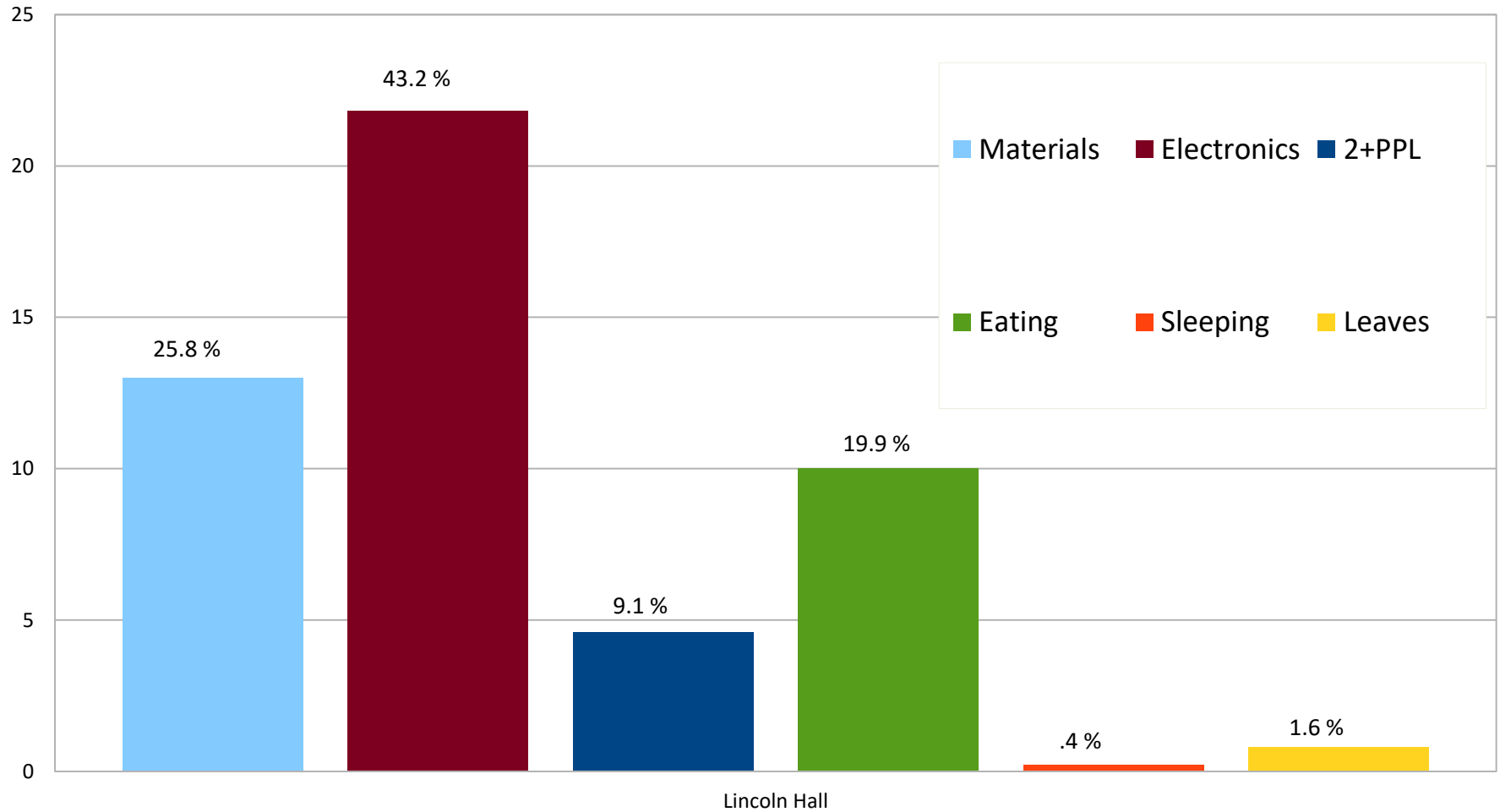
# Naturalistic Observations

## Measuring Frequency of Behaviors

- Materials
- Electronics
- 2+PPL (Collaborating)
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Leaves



# Naturalistic Observations



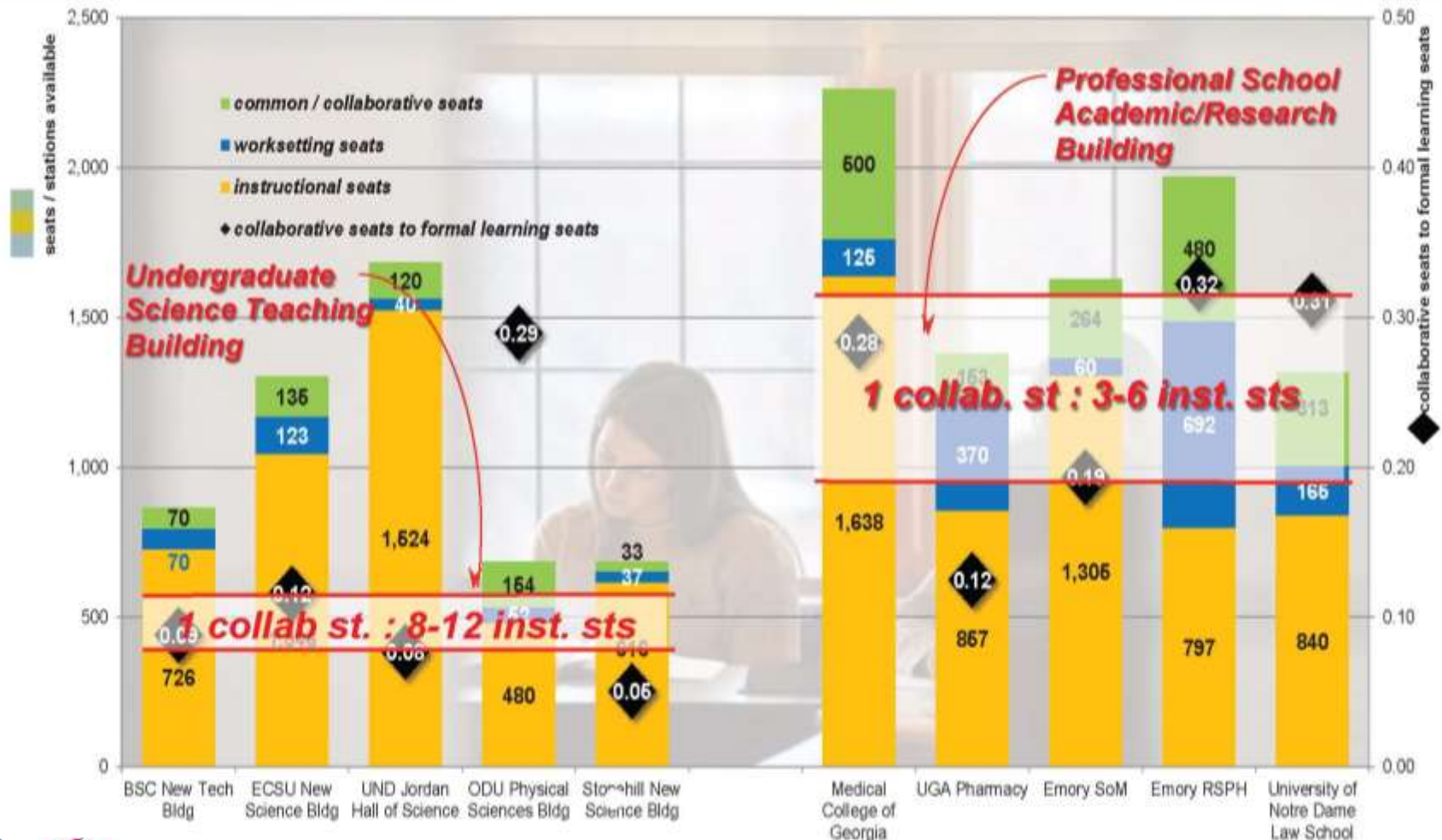
# New Partnerships

## “Pop-Up” Services



# Next Steps: Learning Space Master Plan

## Comparative Analysis: Capacity





# Questions



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*December 11, 2012*

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## LSC Workshop at Portland State University

➤ February 9, 2013

[http://www.pkallsc.org/  
events/lsc-workshop-  
portland-state-university](http://www.pkallsc.org/events/lsc-workshop-portland-state-university)

## Contact Information

**For more information:**

<http://www.pkallsc.org/>

