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

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December 11, 2012
4:00 p.m. EST
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

Shirley Dugdale, AIA
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

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 Queruo.

Photo: Alex Rauch
Questions?

Next: Adolescence and Kit of Parts
Golden Opportunity: Transforming Under-utilized Space

Before

After
Moving to legitimize our ILS program

- Secure Provost matching funds
- Solicit donors through Development Office
Major Gifts Donor Profile

Who?
- Alumni
- Administration
- Friends of UIC

Age
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80-89

Gender
- Female
- Male
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
“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 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.”

“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.”
Assessment/Feedback Methods

Digital Assessment Project

Office of Campus Learning Environments – Project Oasis

Oasis video contest
Digital assessment (camera) project
Surveys and informal interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (Good or Potential Oasis)</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture # (for example, if the digital camera assigns a specific ID number)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Name</td>
<td>UIC Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject/Title</td>
<td>Good Oasis (Light)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/Date/Time</td>
<td>Lecture Center A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative (please elaborate on what we are looking at or what point you are trying to make with the picture)</td>
<td>I started looking at the good oasis 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Oasis Video Contest

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture Center A Oasis</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 36
Naturalistic Observations

Measuring Frequency of Behaviors

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

![Chart showing observations of different activities]

- **Materials**: 25.8%
- **Electronics**: 43.2%
- **2+PPL**: 9.1%
- **Eating**: 19.9%
- **Sleeping**: .4%
- **Leaves**: 1.6%

Lincoln Hall
New Partnerships

“Pop-Up” Services
Next Steps: Learning Space Master Plan
Questions
The University of Illinois at Chicago Experience with Project Oasis, an Informal Learning Space Program

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LSC Workshop at Portland State University

➢ February 9, 2013

http://www.pkallsc.org/events/lsc-workshop-portland-state-university

Contact Information

For more information:

http://www.pkallsc.org/