

## Furnishings Survey Analysis

UMN Bio-Medical Library, January 2017

### Introduction

---

In the spring of 2016, the Bio-Medical Library at the University of Minnesota conducted a limited renovation of three floors of the library.

Renovation elements included removal of a wall on the main level to open up user space adjacent to the service desk and primary entry; repainting; addition of power outlets and technology; improved signage for wayfinding; and new furniture for heavily used areas. The aims of the renovation were to brighten and update the user space, raise the visibility of library services and offer new types of technological space solutions to library users. The library was also conceptually zoned into spaces that would function to support different types of user needs: collaboration (public, interactive space), learning (one-on-one consultations), productivity (specialized equipment and software) and quiet, individual study.

During Fall semester 2016, the Bio-Medical Library asked library users to complete a paper-based survey how well the new furnishings met their needs. This document provides an overview of the survey and its key findings.

### Types of Furnishings

---

New types of technology-enabled spaces were identified and added. The technology-enabled spaces that were part of the survey included small group consultation pods, a technology-enabled data visualization center, and productivity computers offering specialty software. Nearly all new furniture provided adjacent access to electrical outlets.

Library furnishings were selected to provide a variety of types of user space. The renovation area was zoned into a Collaboration area (public, interactive space), a Learning area (one-on-one consultations), a Productivity area (specialized equipment and software) and a Study area (quiet, individual study).

**Table 1:** Library spaces evaluated in user survey of furnishings



(a) Brody: Individual study lounge seating with privacy screen



(b) Campfire: Individual study seating with partial privacy screen



(c) Mediascape: Collaborative, media-enhanced table seating



(d) Data Visualization Center: Collaborative, media-enhanced booth seating with additional stool and counter surrounding large media viewing screen. Connected computer offers a variety specialty software



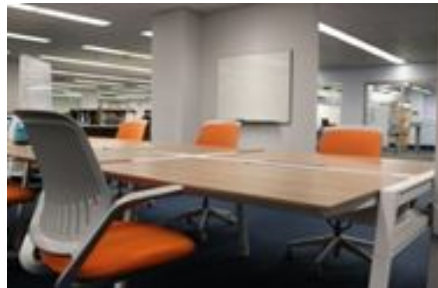
(e) Learning Pod: Collaborative, media-enhanced consultation tables ("pods")



(f) Productivity Computers: Individual workstations with large double-monitors and a variety of specialty software



(g) Standing Height Table: Collaborative or individual study seating and standing room space



(h) Bench Table: Collaborative or individual study seating



(i) Table for Four: Collaborative study setting



(j) Campfire Setting: Collaborative study setting



(k) Swivel Chair with Desk Arm: Collaborative or individual study setting

## Results

The following points are key takeaways from aggregated survey responses (n=47).

- **Very high ratings** for the collaborative Campfire booth seating with privacy screens (j); fully-screened, individual Brody lounges (a); and dual-monitor productivity computer workstations with specialized software (f).
- **Positive ratings for collaborative Campfire booths (j) and Brody lounges (a)** were unsurprising given staff observations of use. Both offer power and some measure of privacy screening, which we anticipated would be desirable to users.
- More surprising was that the **Productivity Computers received the highest comfort rating** of any surveyed seating, perhaps due to the availability of double monitors and more comfortable seating compared to that offered at other computer workstations in the library.

- **Overall low ratings** went to individual Campfire booth seating, swivel chair with swing arm desk attachments, and standing height tables with stool seating.
- The low rating for the individual Campfire seating was surprising, given the opposite reaction to the collaborative Campfire seating. We suspect that the **power outlets** for the individual Campfire locations, while easily physically accessible, are **too hidden from view**. Follow up feedback from users should be solicited after more clearly labeling the outlets.
- The Swivel Chair with Desk Arm was selected for a library area intended for collaboration and was coded for the purposes of the survey as collaborative space; however it had the **worst ratings of any setting for collaboration**. It also had the lowest ratings overall compared to all other settings.
- The **Standing Height Table is very divisive**; people seem to love or hate it, based on its low rating but extremely positive comments and staff observations of high usage.
- The Standing Height Table and Bench Table both had relatively high rates of no response. This was surprising given staff observations of high usage of both areas.
- All ratings for **“use of technology provided”** were strong.
- Responses to, "Would you recommend the Bio-Medical Library as a place to work and study?" were **100% positive**, although there were three surveys that lacked a response. In hindsight, this may have been the result of the survey design, as users scanning the survey quickly may have simply overlooked the question.

The survey was designed to allow users to respond quickly and maximize the number of completed surveys obtained. As a result, it had minimal instruction and the key terms used to evaluate furnishings were not explicitly defined for the user. More in depth data collection via user interviews or focus groups could provide more information.