Fusion Center Conceptual Document

1. Overview

The Fusion Center is a Drake-specific instance of a learning commons. The learning commons is an evolving model for delivery of academic and instructional support services to a specific population of students and faculty. Originating in higher education, the commons concept has proven so successful that it is spreading to businesses, secondary schools, and even into primary schools.

In it's earliest iterations the commons focused on integrating a variety of student services within in a common environment, generally the university's library. As time has gone on, the commons has grown beyond simple collaborative service delivery to focus on creating and sustaining high-quality, functional and dynamic learning environments. While students remain the focus of most learning commons instances, a few also focus on providing instructional support services to faculty, particularly as they relate to integrating new technologies into instruction. Traveling under a variety of names — learning commons, knowledge commons, academic commons — the learning commons is a primarily social and collaborative space, technology-rich and service-focused.

One classic definition of the Learning Commons described the commons as "library-centered but not library-centric." Our concept reframes this description to describe the Fusion Center as "library-centered and knowledge-centric." This places the focus of the area on the entire scholarly process: the acquisition and effective utilization of knowledge in creative outputs. The Fusion Center supports that entire process.

In the Fusion Center the Library performs traditional functions related to research, reference, knowledge management and information literacy within a larger, collaborative service environment. This larger environment fuses library resources with services that develop academic skills such as writing, listening and public speaking with the tools needed to use knowledge in effective and creative ways. Typical creative outputs might include research papers, scholarly articles, video, posters, presentations and other group projects.

Our particular vision is rooted in two very successful models -- the Weigle Information Commons at the University of Pennsylvania and the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity at Eastern Kentucky University. The Weigle Commons is distinguished by functioning as resource for faculty and direct course support in a variety of fields. The Noel Studio is notable for its emphasis on the acquisition of academic skills, primarily through peer-based consultation. Although we are not limited by these models, we feel that these two examples are both worthy of emulation and adaptable to the Drake environment.

Sources for Section 1:

D. Russell Bailey. "From Information Commons to Learning Commons" ACRL National Conference. Minneapolis, MN. Apr. 2005. Available at: http://works.bepress.com/d_r_bailey/28

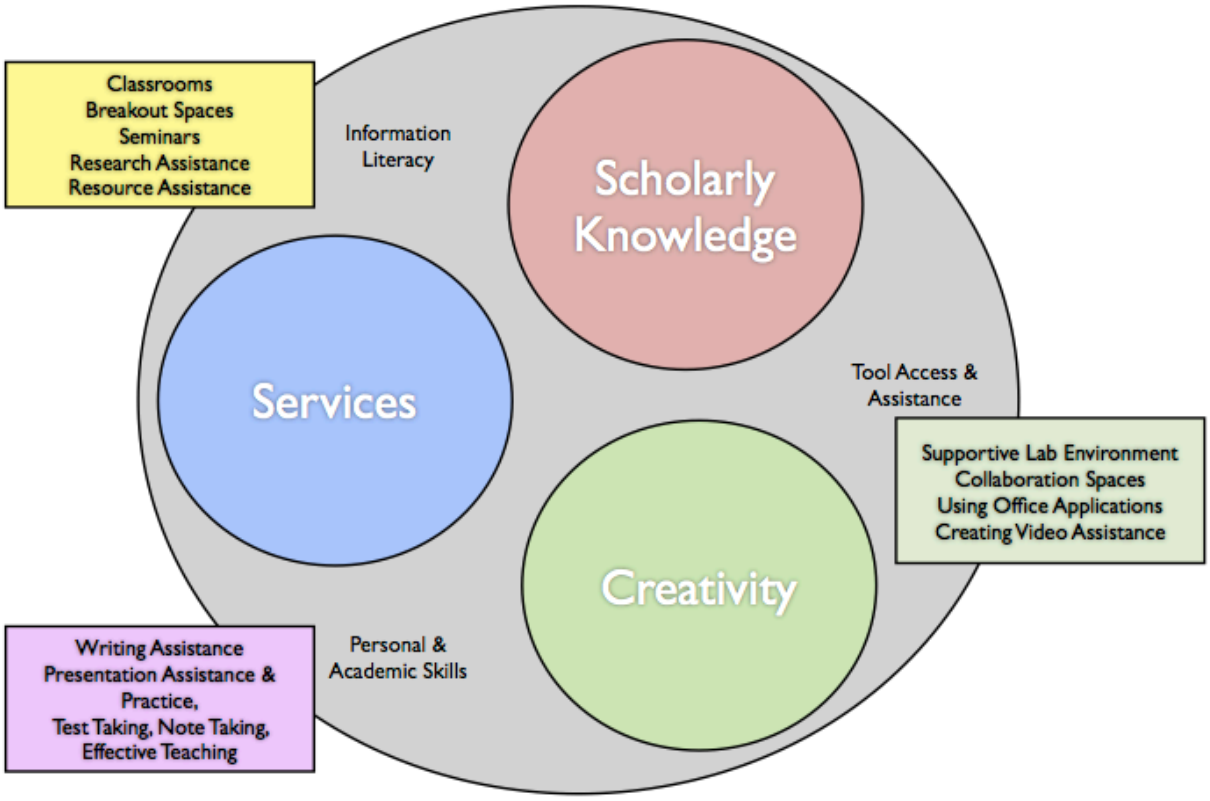
Beagle, Donald. “From Learning Commons to Learning Outcomes: Assessing Collaborative Services and Spaces.” (Research Bulletin). Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research, September 27,2011. Available from http://www.educause.edu/ecar

Noel Studio for Academic Creativity
http://www.studio.eku.edu/faculty-and-staff

Weigle Information Commons
http://wic.library.upenn.edu/

2: Concept

We conceive the Fusion Center as a dynamic, social space that provides the tools and experiences needed to accomplish the work of students and faculty.



The Fusion Center provides access to the body of scholarly knowledge and teaches the skills needed for competent discovery and evaluation of that knowledge.

- Examples of activities : physical and electronic collections, bibliographic instruction, information literacy instruction, research assistance, and critical thinking
- Examples of space: classroom, breakout spaces, seminar rooms, research assistance , resource assistance

The Fusion Center provides services and equipment that develop the personal and academic skills needed to capture and communicate knowledge creatively and effectively.

- Examples of activities: writing assistance, public speaking, tutoring, presentation assistance, note-taking, equipment checkout & training, use of electronic tool & office applications -- many of which will be peer-based.
- Examples of space: consultation areas, group studies, collaboration spaces, media stations, computer lab, plugin and lockdown spaces.

Outputs from the fusion center include posters, presentations, academic papers, videos, infographics, and other digital and physical artifacts.

3: Program

In physical space, the Fusion Center will occupy the main floor of the Library and will include the building entry. The recently renovated Lower Commons is a part of the Fusion Center, providing a generalized social learning/collaboration space and amenities within the Center. Library collections currently on the floor will be relocated to provide additional space for the project area.

Program zones are expected to include a

- state-of-the-art classroom/class lab
- breakout spaces adjacent to the classroom that double as collaboration and consultation space
- space for library circulation, reference and interlibrary loan service points,
- collaborative group studies
- presentation practice rooms
- “boutique” service spaces for writing assistance, tutoring & other academic services
- a computer lab with media stations
- poster/infographics preparation and printing

Nearly all areas will serve multiple purposes and may change functions throughout the day, semester, or academic year. When possible, the Library hopes to align with other departments at Drake and with community partners to provide services through a variety of flexible, collaborative arrangements ranging from the simple provision of space to active participation in supporting class assignments.

The Fusion Center is also expected to maintain a significant virtual footprint that will provide service delivery, showcase the work of students and faculty emerging from the Center and as a recruiting tool for Drake.