

# Functional Area Description - Cowles Library - Lower Commons

01/16/12

## Function & Design Issues:

### Relationship to Drake Mission:

Enhance the exceptional learning environment by providing a dedicated space that specifically supports learning through informal social interaction.

### Functional Design Objective:

This area consists of a shared space throughout the day and late night that includes the Cowles Cafe and serves as a safe, controlled access venue for after-hours study and activities. Social activities in addition to study may occur in portions of this space as special events. The space offers a range of amenities, network access, and collaborative spaces for students, faculty and staff to recharge, relax and interact. Overall ambience of the space should make it a campus “destination”.

### Adjacencies:

This area is the first of a series of proposed renovations of Cowles Library. As renovated, the Lower Commons will be part of an overall integrated plan, with subsequent projects, addressing instructional, active learning, service, and study space.

Primary adjacencies with the Lower Commons include:

- Main floor service area
- Second floor Reading Room and Foyer

### Design Features:

This area should be characterized by furnishings, lighting and acoustics that are flexible enough to facilitate conversation and collaboration, yet also lend themselves to some individual study and reading.

- Remove current classroom
  - Replace with Restrooms, group seating, and location for mobile service station
- Integrate south entrance and hallway into overall area design
  - Replace south doors
  - Create connection with removal of wall and book display “closets”
  - Retain capability to move materials into and out of adjacent library processing area
- Table and lounge seating
  - Variable height
  - Portions of seating should be mobile – to allow for informal groupings
- Lighting
  - Uniform day and night
  - Window sunlight should be controlled
  - Lighting should support informal groupings and movement of furnishings
  - Supplemented by task lighting (at users control)
- Carpeted
- Electrical power should be as omnipresent as feasible and support informal gatherings and mobile furniture

**Additional Design Considerations:**

This space is intended to be informal and support social learning. Within that context, there is an opportunity to promote “fixed” assets that accomplish some additional, but desirable objectives. These include:

- Use access ramp from upper to lower commons to promote transition to social space
- Use paneled hallway to promote transition from social space to upper quiet study area
- Inclusion of a fireplace to promote comfort and “retreat”
- Inclusion of a books display for browsing to promote awareness of “Library”
- Utilization of modular “post and beam” room fixtures, along with mobile seating, to promote flexibility, design integration, and distribution of electrical and lighting
- Development of a set of zones within the space – to support a variety of casual, individual and group experiences
- Inclusion of a mobile station to support service activities and monitor functions
- Provision for a mobile stage to support events
- Storage area to support equipment

**Additional Adjacency Considerations:**

As an option, the Reading and Reading Room Foyer should be conceived either as a primary adjacency during regular operations or an integrated component for after-hours operation. As a primary adjacency, the Reading Room spaces provide scholarly (individual, quiet) study space that complements the shared social study space of the Lower Commons. As an integrated component, the Reading Room would provide for an individual study space distinct from a more group oriented lower commons accessible during after-hours use.

**Signage:**

- Way finding
- External (south entrance area)
- Extended hours information and access procedures

**Security:**

- Assume 24/7
- 3M book security gates
- Internal and external cameras
- Panic buttons
- Improve exterior lighting
- Campus emergency phone

**Access:**

- Additional wireless capacity (Lower Commons and Reading Room)

**Engineering Issues:**

- Stable temperature
- Replace radiators
- Replace windows