

Achieving Transformational Change Through Inclusion

With one of the leading research libraries in North America, this university decided to create a world-class facility worthy of the institution's ranking. But first, the leadership team wanted options.

An easy solution for most universities would be to build a new facility, but this particular library building is at the heart of campus and serves as a cultural pillar for students and campus life. Further complicating matters, the library is land-locked in all directions, so adding square-footage is difficult.

The university asked Haworth's Workplace Strategy team to look at the existing facility to understand how their students, professors, and faculty currently work within the library, and to map issues that would be difficult to quantify, such as:

- The faculty's ability to adapt to an open work environment.
- How the current real estate protocol entitles faculty members to offices.
- Where to begin with change management strategies.

Process

After interviews with the leadership of the university library system, the Haworth Workplace Strategy team enacted four workshops that would focus on three key areas to assess the organization and to help quantify the team's willingness for change:

1. Culture Map – Define current and future state of the organization's culture.
2. Workstyle Map – Define how people work best by measuring interaction and level of concentration.
3. Project Map – A leadership exercise that prioritizes the key project drivers from the Human, Organizational and Facility perspectives.

Culture Map

The workshop participants were asked to think about what culture would support the future of the university library the best. This is where Haworth's Workplace Strategy team found alignment between the various team members that will shape future strategies as the project moves forward.

1. Leadership
2. Learning, Research and Engagement
3. Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine
4. Technical Services & Systems

Workstyle Map

Next, the participants were asked to map the current workstyle at the departmental level. Each department representative was asked to consider:

- Level of Interaction – Collaborating with a Team versus Working Alone as an Individual Contributor
- Level of Concentration – High Degree of Interruptible versus Needing to be Heads Down to Perform Focused Activities



Project Map

As with any project, leadership direction was key to outlining the university library’s project objectives and capturing the vision for the project. Haworth’s Workplace Strategy team worked with the library’s leadership team through an exercise that helped identify the major issues through the filters of Human, Facility and Organizational performance levels. Then the Haworth Workplace Strategy team facilitated conversations to bring the various viewpoints together and unify the leadership’s notions into a clear and concise vision.

“Only through truly listening and working together can you understand what people really need to support how they work. These workshops are a fun and creative way to get everyone involved and allow people the opportunity to have a real impact on their future workplace.”

—Brad Burrows, Haworth North America Strategy Leader and Sr. Workplace Strategist

The workshop’s results proved insightful and critical to identifying key cultural differences at the departmental level. Preferred cultures varied by department within the organization, which we often see. The top two culture preferences were Control and Collaborate. Also, the surveys revealed that most respondents felt that internal university processes were interfering with their ability to work together with students. In addition, the space configuration did not support a collaborative environment.

End Results

After completion of the workshops, the Haworth Workplace Strategy team compiled the various information/results and completed its assessment to connect all the various data streams:

1. Leadership Interviews
2. Observational Tours
3. Leadership Workshop/Project Map
4. Culture Map
5. Workstyle Map



Through the workshop process, we discovered that the dedication of the library team to helping students, professors, and faculty connect to the vast amounts of research material was at the center of everything they did. By focusing on the customer service aspects of the facility, this ensured that they would be contributing to supporting their core culture.

Design recommendations:

- Support team members’ need to focus in work areas.
- Create enclosed collaboration zones that contain noise and separate the quiet work areas and research zones.
- Address the various work styles with flexible wall and furniture solutions.

- By leveraging the space and furniture to support the various behaviors and activities, the faculty will have the ability to choose how they work best and then find the space to support that workstyle.
- Change management strategies need to be focused on how to help faculty deal with the realities of giving up private offices to enable the creation of conferencing zones that allow for student interactivity and ensure future innovation and success.

In addition, design recommendations were provided to help the architects and designers create a space to support the various findings.

This inclusive and knowledge-led initiative helped map a path to the future of the university library and started the process of helping the faculty understand opportunities to support the students better—while still allowing the faculty to focus and concentrate when needed. This strategic engagement was created early in the project process, even prior to building funding, but the rich information will influence the road map for the new library design and change management approach. Currently, the project is in process of having the funding reviewed, and we look forward to moving ahead based on the information and insights provided.



Contributor

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Brad is an architect who specializes in high-performance workplace strategies. He is a key link in leading global clients through research data interpretation and analysis, to help shape and give form to viable strategies and design solutions. He provides transformational change and works with clients to translate their organizations' cultures and business visions into overall space concept strategies, and to align project teams toward a common vision.

Haworth Workplace Strategists connect links between workspace design and human behavior, health, performance, and the quality of the user experience. We share and apply what we learn to inform product development and help our customers shape their work environments. To learn more about this topic or other research resources that Haworth provides, visit www.haworth.com.