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# Incrementally Building Community & User Engagement in the UC San Diego Library

## ABSTRACT

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Library's inaugural Learning Spaces (LSP) Program was formally established on July 1, 2013 through a library-wide reorganization process spanning 2012-2014. As a new program whose offerings remain in development, 2013-2014 presented the opportunity organizationally to initiate new library services and amenities and to adopt a new path based on the program's initial strategic objectives. This chapter details several of the ways in which the program began during its first year to accomplish its goals of engaging library users, building a sense of community and patron ownership within the library's learning spaces, establishing a culture of assessment among program staff, and developing library spaces where students feel welcomed and supported in their academic life. Activities detailed in the chapter are provided as examples for other libraries working toward similar outcomes. Additionally, a limited literature review of library engagement and community building in libraries is presented, along with research support for many of the Learning Spaces Program's new initiatives.

**Keywords:** Community Building, Learning Commons, Learning Spaces, Peer-to-Peer, Puzzles, Stress, Anxiety, Student Advisory, User Engagement, WalkStations

## INTRODUCTION

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Library's inaugural Learning Spaces (LSP) Program was established on July 1, 2013 through a library-wide reorganization process spanning 2012-2014. The program's development both stems from and illustrates the Library's conviction that the physical facility remains an essential part of the campus and plays an important role in the lives of UCSD

students, faculty, and staff. Gate counts for the two facilities averaged 1,700,000 visits per year for calendar years 2011-2013, with weekly gate counts reaching 56,000. To ensure the physical library's continued value, LSP's foundation emphasizes building community within the library and engaging users in developing program services.

Following extensive strategic and reorganizational planning, the UC San Diego Library transformed its internal structure entirely, moving from a collection of discipline-based ("branch") libraries to a programmatic structure consisting of approximately 20 programs within what is now considered a single entity resident primarily in two buildings on UCSD's main campus, rather than a series of unique, relatively independent libraries. Activities continued into the reorganized library were consolidated into the new programs to enable greater consistency across the activity and to yield economies of scale.

The Learning Spaces Program manages a wide array of learning spaces across the Library's two main buildings. The program's 4.45 FTE (full-time equivalency) in staffing was responsible for providing functional user spaces, ensuring adequate user technology/multimedia, offering general user assistance, staffing the library's two Learning Commons desks, managing locational signage, performing programming and outreach, and providing technology-focused educational services. The program's mission explains its role in supporting a robust learning experience by offering a wide array of learning environments, user support, technology, and educational tools to meet diverse learning, teaching, and research needs.

Among others, one primary Learning Spaces Program objective is to encourage physical library users to interact with the reorganized library, rather than passively occupy it. The program hopes to build a sense of community and belonging among library users, encouraging shared ownership of the facilities, and user investment in whether and how well the library serves their academic needs. Prior to recent

restructuring, branch library staff worked to provide interesting and appropriate amenities within their spaces and establish a sense of community among discipline-specific user groups, while LSP now leads this effort library-wide.

This chapter details several ways LSP began to accomplish its goals of engaging library users, building community, and developing welcoming library spaces and presents a brief review of research supporting program activities. Initiatives detailed in the chapter may offer ideas for libraries working toward similar outcomes. In the UCSD example, limited funding for new initiatives, and limited program staffing to achieve them, meant progress began at a slow, steady pace. Nonetheless, circumstances at other libraries may support a similarly thoughtful, incremental, and deliberate path, which also allows for continually evaluating initiatives, making appropriate modifications, and iteratively enhancing services.

## **BACKGROUND**

Following earlier thinking that questioned the continued need for physical library spaces, several changes in libraries revitalized the importance of library buildings in the past 10-15 years, strengthened the need to engage users in designing libraries to serve them, and supported the value of building community among physical library users. Meunier & Eigenbrodt (2014) report increased publications about library space, its qualities, social aspects, and design in the first decade of the 21st century (p. 218), which led to construction of numerous, spectacular library buildings. After years focusing on constructing virtual library environments, this re-emergence of the importance of ‘library as place’ returned both user engagement and community building in libraries to the foreground. Popularized by Ray Oldenberg, the term “Third Place” refers to alternatives to home and work (the first two places) (Elmborg, 2011, p. 348). A visible trend among users shows them to prefer more welcoming, engaging, and exciting places like coffee shops, bookstores, and cafes for learning, socializing, and recreation, resulting in increased competition with the library for “customers.” Watson (2013) recommends libraries attempt to combine the productivity of the second place (work) with the safety, comfort, and ownership of the first place (home)

(p. 122). Academic libraries are reclaiming their roles as community-building agents by borrowing ideas from public library colleagues (Demas & Scherer, 2002, p. 66) to address the need for library buildings to adapt into more attractive, user-friendly, and diversified places; reestablish their role in the changing context of user preferences; and incorporate the idea of involving users in planning (Meunier & Eigenbrodt, 2014, p. 218). With the public at large becoming more design conscious, Watson (2009) advises libraries to ensure that the “identity a space projects is relevant to [library users] and reflects or embodies the identity of the institution and the students therein” (p. 255).

Meunier and Eigenbrodt (2014) further explain that library buildings must demonstrate value for money, and prove to detractors the continued need for a library on campus in the 21st century (p. 221). Lippincott and Duckett (2013) ask librarians to consider whether high library visitation is enough to justify the hefty resources invested in most library renovations (p. 12). Dwindling funding for libraries has led to a call for greater accountability and showing the library’s value in terms of its impact on student learning and success. Even without pressure from university administration to justify renovation expenses, Lippincott and Duckett (2013) suggest that renovations present opportunities to demonstrate the value of the library to the university’s teaching and learning efforts and to showcase how the library contributes to campus life (p. 12). Effective user engagement can support this emerging campus emphasis on demonstrating return on investment. Feedback from library users themselves on how the library contributes to their academic achievement can confirm the library’s integral role in academic success within the campus community and ensure the library receives an ample allocation of limited campus funding. Downey (2008) advises that “the future of librarianship depends on how libraries communicate and grow with the new learning communities” (p. 461). Wilcox (2013), too, advises that “cultivating meaningful interaction is the first step in the engagement process” (p. 5).

User engagement and community building can seamlessly complement one another, as processes associated with the former can be used to achieve the latter. They also contribute to establishing a sense of

ownership among library users and discovering or understanding user needs. Likewise, a complementary relationship exists between user engagement and marketing. Offering activities that users enjoy and appreciate can result in positive user feedback and positive relationships with users. “Connecting with users in order to form relationships is crucial to creating awareness of the library’s resources and services” (Wilcox, 2013, p. 5). Mathews (2014) recounts one library user who lauded library programming “as more than just entertainment or educational endeavors,” but as a signal of a library’s compassion for its users.

Like user engagement, building community in the physical library offers its own challenges and opportunities. The changing nature of the physical library stimulated the move from a place primarily for accessing library resources to a community space enabling both social and independent learning. In their community-building role, libraries bring people together and create “a sense of connection to the values, traditions, and intellectual life of the community” (Demas & Scherer, 2002, p. 65). Additionally, libraries can create opportunities for those in differing “disciplinary, social, political, or economic circles” to interact, either on a one-time or regular basis (p. 65). Strong-Wilson & Ellis (2007) also recognize the role of ‘place’ as a source of meaning, belonging, and identity (p. 43). Libraries serve as a necessary gathering place and safe haven, physically and intellectually, as well as a neutral, academic-focused, “third space,” separate from users’ homes and classrooms. Many visitors frequent the library without utilizing library materials, but enjoy and appreciate the building for its reflective and inspirational value and conduciveness to study, learning, and social interaction.

How the configuration of spaces works to hinder or facilitate interaction has been the subject of study for some time (Ellis, 2004, Gandini, 1998, and Carter, 2007, and others). Readings in early childhood education literature reflect Malaguzzi’s (1998) proposal of the learning environment and its impact on learning as the “Third Teacher” alongside parents and teachers. Following Malaguzzi’s statement came a “resurgence of interest in the environment and a new emphasis on the pedagogical

possibilities of enriched and aesthetically pleasing environments” (Bone, 2013, p. 62). This attention to how space can be thoughtfully arranged recognizes the impact the environment can have on behavior and mental state, including levels of concentration, curiosity, motivation, interaction, comfort, engagement, and more. Klein (2013) agrees that “the layout and design of any space can impact the mood and productivity for the individuals intended to use the area.” Seeing the environment as an educator recognizes how one’s surroundings can contribute to learning (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007, p. 40). Watson (2013) agrees that “how users experience the library is dependent on the quality of the space” (p. 119). Because of the wealth of subtle stimuli in any environment, Watson advises librarians to think purposefully about the spaces they develop for users (p. 120). “Children will often find uses for objects and spaces that adults do not anticipate or intend” (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007, p. 43). So can the ways college students might address their needs differ from solutions conceived by librarians. Here, too, engagement with users can help academic libraries create *student spaces*, rather than *spaces for students* based on librarian assumptions about student needs and preferences. Lippincott (2010) supports conducting needs assessments with library users, explaining “it is important to collect information on the actual needs of students and not just on the needs perceived by librarians, who are frequently from a different generation” (p. 29).

## **DISCUSSION: User Engagement**

User engagement and participatory decision-making can identify gaps in library services and opportunities for new or improved offerings, thus enabling design of effective spaces and services to best support users in meeting their academic goals. While stakeholders include end-users, library staff, funding agents, and institutional governing bodies, Lascarides (2012) positions library patrons as the most important stakeholders in any library project, explaining that the success or failure of a library service ultimately depends on whether it adds value for library patrons (p. 23). Sullivan (2013), too, espouses the benefits of libraries looking outward to the communities they serve. “Long recognized as trusted

educational and cultural institutions, libraries that more actively engage with their communities discover innovative services, increase their relevance, and build deeper community support” (p. 5). To help ensure that student engagement is formalized, libraries including The University of Texas at San Antonio and Samford University have established librarian positions responsible for the task.

User engagement can take many forms, including participatory design, which recommends that all stakeholders play an active role in the design process to ensure end results meet actual stakeholder needs (Meunier & Eigenbrodt, 2014, p. 219). Challenges of participatory design include balancing feedback, preferences, and desires of competing stakeholders; identifying solutions that minimize conflicts between the needs of different user groups; ensuring effective listening, communication, and meaningful participation throughout the process; and managing expectations of those who do provide feedback. Nonetheless, added investments in staffing and time commitments associated with a participative approach prove critical to creating spaces suited to the user communities they are intended to support. Foster (2014) explains the imperative for adopting participatory design for libraries, saying that the practice begins with the belief that relying on how things have always been done no longer serves us well in times of rapid and disruptive change (p. 1). While libraries have long been modeled on those that have come before, “to imitate older academic libraries now would be to build a library that is obsolete even before it opened” (p. 1). It has been shown, too, that both pedagogical practices and current twenty-somethings differ from those that came before, and libraries must effectively adapt to this new reality. According to Lippincott (2010), “college students of the Millennial generation often do their academic work either with or around their friends or classmates, make ample use of technology and digital content, and focus on their academic work late in the day and into early morning” (p. 27). She suggests that the learning commons emerging in the past decade complement the behaviors of this user group by reinforcing social aspects of learning, providing abundant technology and digital content, and offering study space available 24/7 (p. 27). She further argues that “understanding Millennial students’ style is key to developing a robust service program to engage and support them” (p. 27). With Millennials comprising

the largest of its target audiences, one Learning Spaces Program objective is to understand and satisfy the library space needs of this key user group.

Unobtrusive observation, focus groups, interviews, mapping, surveys, and other ethnographic methods are additional examples of user engagement which, if done regularly, can allow libraries to continually stay in touch with changing user needs and ensure library spaces regularly evolve accordingly. Lascarides (2012) encourages libraries to solicit patron feedback at every step of a project and employ a wide variety of communication tools to engage users in two-way conversations (p. 24). Chan and Wong (2013) also urge that the process of engaging the library's multiple user communities is a "necessary component to the success of new services and facilities" (p. 44). Another type of engagement that can lead to a sense of user ownership of the library is allowing users to take an active role in library services, which has shown positive results in the literature (Bolan & Nelson, 2008, Mori, 2008, Shoemaker, 2010, Techman, 2014, and others).

Understanding the importance of ensuring that investments in libraries meet the needs of those who will eventually use them, engaging users in the design process is increasingly viewed as beneficial, rather than as an exhausting disturbance to a project (Meunier & Eigenbrodt, 2014, p. 218). Many libraries already have positive relationships with existing library users which can be leveraged to support development of new facilities or amenities for users. Ideally, this will engender a mutually beneficial cycle in which users bring forth new ideas, and the library continuously evolves to meet its users' needs (Meunier & Eigenbrodt, 2014, p. 225).

## **LSP User Engagement & Assessment Activities**

As might be considered standard for any new organization, its first year was a time of active exploration, feedback gathering, and experimentation for the Learning Spaces Program. The Learning

Spaces Program attempts to initiate and enable meaningful interactions between the library and users of its physical facilities. Staff in the emerging program felt strongly about establishing a culture of engagement, assessment, and evaluation into the program's foundations from its inception and folding these elements into the planning stages for all program activities. The program director expects and reinforces this mindset, ensuring that users or their representatives are involved in program planning, appropriate statistics and feedback are gathered and applied to decision-making, and summary reports are shared via the library staff intranet.

One element deemed by the Learning Spaces Program to be essential for embracing user engagement as a regular practice, is employing an inspired, engaged, and forward-thinking staff and leaders. As proven at the UCSD Library, staff flexibility is essential to instilling a philosophy of user engagement with and among library users. Staff discovered that the best way to learn how to perform various assessments is to undertake them, continually improving the process during subsequent efforts, and that even small, inexpensive steps can yield useful results and actionable insight. Using student workers for project implementation allowed LSP staff to focus on higher-level project planning and analysis of results. Program staff began to analyze new or formerly unused statistics on spaces and technology to inform planning and decision-making. LSP also favors piloting activities over full-scale implementation before making significant investments to help determine long-term costs, viability of a permanent operation, and barriers to user adoption. Such trial periods help staff become trained with the offering and facilitate gathering of user feedback to help ensure its future success.

The LSP Program conducted several surveys to inform future service planning, preferring efforts targeted at distinct user groups to avoid widespread survey fatigue among library users. Program staff actively solicited feedback from library users, in ways that proved manageable for its limited funding and staffing, to encourage engagement and interaction between them and the library. In its first year, Learning Spaces staff conducted multiple, small-scale assessments, statistical analyses, and pilot initiatives to learn

about user needs and to understand user perspectives. Establishing a regular practice of actively seeking user input before, during, and after implementing new initiatives can be an essential component of an environment engaged with the users it serves.

## **Peer Consultants**

Since first detailed by Constance Mellon in 1986, much has been written about library anxiety, and most public service librarians are at least anecdotally familiar with such anxiety on the part of many library users. While initially identified primarily via informal observation, in the last two decades, “formal, systematic studies have been conducted on the nature, etiology, characteristics, or consequences of this phenomenon” (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 30). Onwuegbuzie further summarizes a wealth of research consistently showing anxiety to adversely affect learning and achievement, and deems library anxiety among the most prevalent forms of all academic-related anxiety (p. 29). Library anxiety can be motivating or debilitating. While human intervention services in libraries, dating back to 1876 (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 268), helped reduce user anxiety by bringing intervention strategies down to a personal level, Bostick (1992) also identified *barriers with staff* as one component of library anxiety. This refers to student perceptions that librarians and other library staff are intimidating, unapproachable, and inaccessible, too busy to provide assistance, and engaged in more important duties than helping library users (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 36). Malvasi (2009), too, acknowledges a history in which less than welcoming librarians appeared even more intimidating to already-hesitant library users (p. viii). Mellon’s two-year study of 6,000 students concluded that between 75-85% of undergraduates described their library experiences in terms of anxiety (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 30). Mellon study participants reported “feeling lost, afraid to approach library staff, and unable to find their way around the library” (Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005, p. 235). Fisher also summarizes that participants were “hesitant to ask library staff the questions that might allay their anxiety and improve their skills for fear of appearing inadequate” (p. 235). Onwuegbuzie (2004) further summarizes research indicating that “anxious library

users focus less of their time, energy, and attention on the task itself, thereby impeding the attainment of their goals (p. 30). Increased library anxiety results when a student contemplates or requests help from library staff (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 37), while students who perceive the library as safe, welcoming, and non-threatening report far lower levels of anxiety. User incompetence and perceived powerlessness and inadequacy often results in shame and concealment, and thus reinforce many users' unwillingness to reveal their ignorance either to their instructors or librarians (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 32).

As a known ailment, librarians have attempted a variety of strategies aimed at preventing and reducing library anxiety. While knowledgeable library staff working at a service desk can “bridge an important psychological and intellectual barrier between the user and the unfamiliar library setting” (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 268), libraries must overcome a general feeling among library users that librarians are unapproachable and lack sufficient time to provide in-depth user assistance. In an attempt to decrease barriers and anxiety associated with library users approaching librarians at service desks, a peer-to-peer mentoring and/or assistance model has been instituted in a variety of public and academic libraries, information technology departments, and campus student support units. Both reference and commons services are increasingly turning to a peer-to-peer model rather than staffing desks with librarians and library staff. Indeed, Lee Williams (2011), Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Wheaton College in Massachusetts, writes that many aspects of the collegiate experience can benefit from involvement of peers able to explain difficult concepts in accessible language (p. 99). This applies equally to the academic library and Bodemer (2014) strongly suggests that such settings “harness peer learning dynamics to enhance student learning and success” (p. 162).

Bodemer (2014) details the successful LibRAT (Library Research Assistance Technician) program at California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, first piloted in the spring of 2010. The program initially provided library reference service through peers in residence halls, later adding chat reference services, and eventually moving away from residence halls to the library's Research Help Desk.

This model “entirely exceeded expectations” (p. 171), leading Bodemer to conclude that the LibRAT project “confirms the experience attested elsewhere that motivated and properly trained undergraduates can provide quality reference” (p. 171). The success of peers at the library service desk then led to LibRATs leading 97 of the library’s 140 information literacy sessions during regular terms in 2011-2012 (p. 171). Post-session student surveys indicated overwhelming support for peer-led sessions over those taught by librarians. “The prime virtue in such student-reported qualitative data is that it speaks to the unique and therefore most important component of peer teaching: the affective response of students. If students do not respond favorably to the peer session leaders, or, as in this case, even more favorably than to librarians, then there is no pedagogical gain in having peers lead the sessions” (p. 172).

The UCSD Library’s Learning Spaces Program has implemented a service model exclusively employing student workers (called Peer Consultants or PCs) at its two service desks. The PCs are intended to lessen user anxiety in the library. Furthermore, because librarians tend to be female and library culture is often seen as female-based, males have been found to have higher levels of library anxiety than females (Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 35). As a result, LSP has ensured that it employs a balance of female and male Peer Consultants to assist library users.

LSP’s Peer Consultants were critical to the Learning Spaces Program’s success in its first year, working a total of 4,799 hours in fiscal year 2013-2014. The program takes full advantage of its PCs’ unique student perspectives, understanding of library users, and discipline-based knowledge. The program uses Peer Consultants to gather feedback from PCs themselves and library users. The PCs act as a ready focus group on myriad program issues, including naming for library spaces and services; online content; tour script language; graphic design for signs and publications; effective publicity and outreach; and more. During their time assigned to the Commons service desks, Peer Consultants respond to user inquiries, and complete a variety of projects such as those mentioned throughout this chapter. They serve

as ambassadors for the library and Learning Spaces Program, and act as an essential and intentional staffing component for the program.

In addition to their service desk and engagement activities, Peer Consultants play an important role in building community in the Learning Commons. Each of the program's 8-12 PCs works consistent hours in the Commons and becomes known by regular library users. Profiles of each Peer Consultant, including their name, academic discipline, and photograph, sit on the service desk during their shifts. Peer Consultants also walk around the Commons hourly, straightening up and engaging with users, as needed. The required uniform, a custom-designed tee shirt, distinguishes Peer Consultants as library employees. While many library users may remain reluctant to ask for assistance, user feedback thus far has shown, in the LSP example, that users find student peers more informal and approachable at the service desk than they would librarians or staff, at least for the general and technology-focused questions typically received at its Learning Commons desks.

The Learning Spaces Program embraces the practical knowledge each PC contributes, regardless of academic discipline. Computer science majors bring advanced technical skills to their positions which they can share with PC colleagues. Others offer media or specialized database expertise. One Peer Consultant accepted to a graduate MLIS program was eager to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating the program's assessment initiatives. Examples of PC projects include collaborative development of slides for digital photo frames at each Learning Commons desk and creation of large, rotating message posters for the Commons. The PCs chose informational slides and posters to produce and designed them in student-centered, user-friendly ways.

As one unobtrusive method for decoding library user behavior, Peer Consultants conduct informal observational studies of activities or equipment use near the service desks, where they spend a great deal of time. When evaluating program services or amenities, PCs contribute important feedback based on

their use of the offering, user comments they have received, training users with the equipment, and observations made of users. Use of Peer Consultants saves money over staff and librarians, but has proven far more valuable for the student perspectives they bring to the program. Libraries without Peer Consultants might consider other alternatives, including ARL's Career Enhancement Program (CEP). Each summer, the UCSD library hosts two CEP fellows, based upon the fellow's professional interests and program needs. As current graduate students themselves (albeit in library and information sciences), CEP fellows bring their own student perspective to their work in the host library. Other possibilities include establishing a student internship program or student advisory board to reap similar benefits.

### **Selected User Engagement Initiatives**

To complement traditional surveys and informal feedback, the Learning Spaces Program experimented with more creative ways to learn about library-related needs, uses, and perceptions among users. One such effort was the White Box Project, inspired by Schmidt's (2014) *Library Journal* article (p. 24). Twenty-five self-selected students used markers to draw images and write text on individual white, gift boxes to reflect their feelings about the library. Interested participants were screened to exclude current or former library student workers and ensure representation across a variety of disciplines and classifications (freshman, senior, grad student, etc.). Participants could write or illustrate existing elements of the library that they utilized or appreciated, and could suggest new services or amenities describing their ideal library. Peer Consultants designed boxes in advance to serve as examples for later participants. User participants were each given a \$10 UCSD gift card for an estimated half-hour of their time. Peer Consultants reviewed all completed boxes and drafted a report of findings, speeding the process of sharing results with staff across the library and potentially acting on any suggestions. For less than \$300 for supplies and incentives, the program gained valuable, creatively-delivered user insight. Participants took the project seriously and offered thoughtful ideas for library consideration, while participant comments showed that they enjoyed this unconventional method of sharing feedback.

Completed boxes were displayed as a colorful, eye-catching exhibit to inform and inspire library users. Library staff, too, enjoyed seeing the finished boxes. One staff commented, “I’ve been meaning to let you know I like your boxes display of student needs. It was a very creative way to engage with them.”

LSP’s Space Drawing Exercise to inform the re-envisioning of a large library study area mirrored its White Box Project in number and type of participants and incentives used. Participants used a large, blank floor plans to draw desired furnishings, technologies, amenities, and other elements they would like in the space, and could clarify their drawing with notes. Pencil was primarily employed, but colored pencils were encouraged for expressing color preferences for study area design. Posters and social media announcements helped promote the activity and recruit participants. Proving faster and more effective than scheduling individual participant sessions allowed for drop-in participation, staffed by a Peer Consultant to welcome and instruct participants. Peer Consultants contributed valuable student perspectives and participated in planning and hosting the project, helping it move along more quickly than otherwise possible.

Initiated as a suggestion from a PC, a third inexpensive way the program hoped to gain an understanding of how users view the library and what they would like it to be, was a planned photography project entitled My Ideal Library. Incorporated with its annual welcome back party for undergraduates, the University of Michigan Library’s “My Ideal Library” projects are highly successful (see photos online at flickr). For the UCSD project, users were invited to be photographed with a paper on which they would written a word/phrase to complete the sentence “My ideal library...” Photographed responses would be posted in the Commons and on library-wide digital signs. The activity was intended to solicit insight for the library and to be fun for users. It required funding only for purchasing participant incentives, and focused on positive aspects of current or possible library offerings, rather than shortcomings. As with previously detailed activities, the program’s Peer Consultants performed much of the outreach and implementation.

A final project, the VIP Study Room Contest, offered a highly sought after reward. Late in the Winter 2014 term, social media announcements encouraged students to submit comments on what they love about the UCSD Library. Respondents were entered in a drawing to win 24-hour use of a “VIP study room” in the main library’s Overnight Study Commons. A well-located, ample-sized, technology-enabled group study room was decorated with ribbons and balloons, cordoned off with velvet ropes, and blocked in the reservation system during the reward period. The room was stocked with chips, energy drinks, baked goods, and a gift basket holding blue books, school supplies, candy, and a campus gift card. The contest winner was given exclusive use of the room for a 24-hour period early in Finals Week, when study space of all types, especially group study rooms, is at a premium. The winner also received six “passes” allowing friends to use the room, even when the winner was not present.

Results of each of these four initiatives offered issues and ideas for the library to consider, confirmed the value of existing library offerings, or substantiated need for new initiatives already being planned. White Box participant suggestions spanned a wealth of topics falling into several broad categories: Furniture/Spaces (70 mentions), Food/Drink (38), De-stressing Activities (32), Technology (30), Collections (8), Supplies (5), and Academic Support (4). Many students expressed interest in creative and interesting furniture and aesthetics within the library, and a stress-free lounge offering relaxing activities for breaks between hours spent studying. Among the most popular requests were comfortable soft seating; interesting/colorful decorations or art; a quiet, comfortable, lounge area; the ability to purchase coffee and snacks; and more outlets. With the Space Drawing Exercise, too, major themes across the responses included more outlets, a coffee cart or food vending, whiteboards, couches, quiet and collaborative areas, and consolidating copiers and scanners in an isolated copy room. Illustrating a clear trend, the My Ideal Library results also centered around the need for a food service operation in the library. With the VIP Study Room Contest, the overwhelmingly positive comments submitted spanned the breadth of library offerings. Feedback covered the library as a study space for

individual and group work, library resources, librarian expertise and assistance, helpful staff, chat reference services, overnight access, computers, reserves, puzzles and games, interlibrary loan, Special Collections, and the library building as an icon for learning. In addition to the requested feedback, one participant commented on the contest itself: “This contest is awesome, and a VIP study room during finals week is priceless/invaluable!”

These four initiatives met with a range of success. Peer Consultant evaluation rated the White Box Project as one of the program’s most successful 2014 initiatives. The Space Drawing Exercise also generated interesting and informative user feedback. Both worked well and proved worth the effort. The VIP Study Room Contest was deemed an overwhelming success by all involved - staff, PCs, and participants alike - and yielded a wealth of valuable insight on why users value the library. LSP partnered with others to publicize and host the event. This event produced the highest level of user-engagement yet seen among the library’s social media initiatives.

The My Ideal Library project, however, did not produce sufficient results. Serving as an insightful learning opportunity, the latter project did not yield the enthusiasm or participation among users LSP staff anticipated. With fewer than ten individuals participating, the timing shortly before Finals Week is a suspected contributor to low participation. Users and library student workers also indicated reluctance to be photographed. In the future, staff may eliminate the photography portion and simply invite users to provide a word or phrase describing their ideal library. Streamlining or eliminating the photography waiver could also address the anxiety expressed about how the library might use the photographs. The program will incorporate the My Ideal Library idea into other programming efforts by including it on ‘tickets’ for drawings for incentives. Responses will be requested on one side of the tickets and one’s name and email on the other. It is hoped that by making these comment cards and associated rewards widely available during Welcome Week, campus orientations, and other events will generate comments

on what a wide range of students (including new freshmen and transfers) expect from their university library.

## **LSP COMMUNITY-BUILDING AMENITIES & INITIATIVES**

Emphasis on building community among physical library users has increased in recent years, prompting new spaces and services to emerge in both public and academic libraries. Indeed, libraries serve as a hybrid of academic and social spaces for the highly social activity of learning (Downey & Abram, 2008, p. 466). In 2008, Stephen Abram advised librarians to “prepare for a new generation of users and the way they learn” (Downey & Abram, 2008, p. 461). Libraries are responding to this call by designing spaces for a generation that learns more effectively through collaboration and social interaction. Watson (2009) agrees that developing spaces where students can meet, connect, and interact with faculty and peers in a social setting “improves the collegiate experience and provides increased opportunities for improved learning” (p. 254). The establishment of maker spaces and programming marks another emerging trend in public and academic libraries that can lead to a sense of community. Outside the library, newly-designed college classroom buildings, too, are increasingly intended to facilitate effective teaching, as well as instill a sense of community among users of the space (Narum, 2013). Because of its frequent role as a community center and meeting place, public libraries have long offered ample programming intended to build community with and among their users. Children’s departments in public libraries have traditionally excelled in creating spaces children enjoy and over which they feel a sense of ownership. More recently, dedicated teen spaces, often designed in collaboration with teens themselves, have provided the opportunity around which public libraries can build community among teen users. True in both the digital and physical realms, contemporary libraries need to successfully engage and illustrate their value and relevance to 21<sup>st</sup> century library users. Davenport and Beck (2001) assert that being part of a community of users is a powerful aspect of attracting and retaining users in an era characterized by plentiful information, but limited human attention spans (p. 2).

In its inaugural year, the Learning Spaces Program implemented a number of amenities and initiatives intended to help build community in the library's learning spaces, address high stress impacting many students throughout the academic year, show responsiveness to users and user suggestions, and better align with the wider student experience. Examples of amenities LSP added include free-roaming lapdesks for lounge chairs, table tenting or flyer distribution in the Commons by campus units or student groups, exhibits of academic posters or student research, bulletin boards for users to post items related to academic life, candy at the service desks, and cleaning supplies for patron use. Because users tend to take better care of spaces they feel belong to and represent them, these activities help users feel some ownership over the library spaces, feel welcome in the library, and see themselves, their disciplines, and their interests represented in the library.

## **Puzzles & Games**

While many libraries have included jigsaw puzzles in their collections for years, large-scale puzzle contests requiring library resources to solve emerged in American libraries in the 1930s (Nicholson, 2013, p. 346). Some libraries became frustrated with overuse of their materials from the popularity of these contests; others focused on using the opportunity to teach patrons how to find the answers or display the needed reference works (p. 347). So, too, have contemporary libraries held opposing views of games and gaming in the library. Some appreciate the ability of games to attract users to the library, while others develop policies forbidding gaming as noisy, disruptive, and unrelated to academic endeavors. Nonetheless, Nicholson (2013) concludes that because "libraries are places for the mind to play, learn, and explore" and "games, puzzles, and toys are tools for people to play, learn, and explore, it makes sense that these forms of recreation have value and continue to fit well alongside other library services" (p. 357). Supporting their role in community building in libraries, Phillippe Aries argued

some years ago that games historically represented a principal means societies employ to unite their people and strengthen collective bonds (Adams & Edmonds, 1977, p. 360).

Jigsaw puzzles can help teach and reinforce patience, focus, problem-solving, and thinking skills, as well as teamwork and cooperation. In a collaborative setting, they also provide a common experience, challenge, and sense of achievement, enjoyment, satisfaction, and success upon completion. White (2005) notes the educational value of jigsaw puzzles, explaining that completing them develops the abilities to reason, deduce, analyze, sequence, develop logical thought, and solve problems, while also enhancing eye-hand coordination and spatial awareness (p. 1). Completing jigsaw puzzles allows the left hemisphere of the forebrain a mental break while the right hemisphere tackles the color and spatial concepts of a visual puzzle (Gebers, 1985, p. 548). Similar to the benefits Gebers found in younger children who complete puzzles (p. 548), college students can reap rewards from engaging the right brain as a refresher from long hours of study typically involving the often overworked left brain required for most traditional scholarship, study, and coursework-related activities in the university setting. While “the left brain is the preferred brain in school learning,” Webb (1983) explains that learners who use both hemispheres cooperatively fare best academically and socially (p. 515).

Dedicating two, standing-height tables to “Shared Puzzles” proved an overwhelming success and contributes to building community in the library by uniting individuals around a shared activity and common goal. LSP rotates puzzles across two separate locations of the main library. Frequented by UCSD’s engineering students, the puzzles have grown increasingly difficult, yet remain highly popular with students across disciplines. While 1,000-piece puzzles were used initially, more challenging 1,500 piece ones, and those without edges or with extra pieces, now provide a welcome mental challenge for users. The program’s collection consists of several dozen puzzles, each put out for 5-10 days before being replaced. If completed early, PCs break up the puzzle for users to complete again. Program staff learned that some users get such satisfaction out of completing a puzzle that they “steal” one piece temporarily so they are able to put in the final piece once the remainder is completed! Rare is the time when no one is

working on the puzzles. Completing a jigsaw puzzle “requires your brains and your fingers, but not the kind of concentration that precludes socialization” (Schultz, 2002, p. 6), making the library puzzles ideal for completing with a friend or fellow library user. Prized for their novelty, building community, and exercising a different part of the brain than traditional reading and studying, many participants have submitted positive comments about the shared puzzles. One anonymous Facebook post offered, “I love that giant jigsaw puzzle that’s always in Geisel! It always makes me so happy.” Users also appreciate the ability to complete the puzzles without the space requirements needed for doing them at home and being able to do just enough of the puzzle before it becomes tedious and frustrating.

UCSD’s Learning Commons also offers Scrabble on a Lazy Susan to allow for flexible, enjoyable use of students’ self-directed time in the library. The table’s writable surface allows players to keep score on the tabletop using a dry-erase marker. Hasbro Gaming’s School SCRABBLE Program (2014) insists Scrabble can provide a fun and worthwhile extension of the classroom, with the game positively impacting players by strengthening skills like strategic thinking, teamwork, social skills, attention span, verbal skills, curiosity, math skills, and time management. Research has shown Scrabble’s importance in developing an academic vocabulary for English language learners, thus supporting reading comprehension and enhancing general vocabulary (Sibold, 2011, p. 24). UCSD attracts a significant number of international students and non-native English speakers who might benefit from Scrabble play.

A large Chess table, aligned with campus’ student Chess group, is also well-used. Both game tables are placed near windows in a bright, open, heavily trafficked area of the Commons. It is generally acknowledged that learning Chess develops in children a cognitive and social abilities that serve them well across the lifespan. The World Chess Federation (2014) claims that “children who learn Chess are, on average, more intelligent, healthier, and better socially adjusted” than those who do not. Chess can improve one’s ability to recognize patterns, plan ahead, focus, concentrate, and pay attention to detail. It can also enhance perception, memory, thinking, confidence, interpretation, visual imagination, and brain

activation (Hunt & Cangemi, 2014, p. 363). Skill with Chess rewards and reinforces “long-term thinking, looking at the big picture, assessing risks and potential rewards, forming contingency plans, learning from mistakes, perseverance, patience, and other intellectual and character traits that can lead to success in business (and in life in general)” (Graber, 2009, p. 79).

Because use of them can engage and strengthen right-brain creative, visual, and spatial skills, LSP staff also purchased a collection of KĒVA planks and is investigating possibilities with KĒVA’s producer, MindWare, for hosting an event through its museum exhibit program. Blending an art gallery and science lab to support “Artistic Scientists and Scientific Artists.” The planks should appeal to engineering, architecture, visual arts students, and others.

Hunt & Cangemi (2014) make a convincing argument for how the game of Chess can be used in primary school, higher education, and other settings to develop successful leaders in any field of endeavor by enhancing the cognitive capacity of those in leadership, from an early age, for a new, millennial, global, competitive workforce (p. 366). They propose Chess as one tool for developing entrepreneurs and organizational leaders “capable of predicting, managing, and interpreting complexities that, as yet, uninvented technologies will change in the future” (p. 360). Chess instructs players in the value of considering all possibilities, maintaining self-control, anticipating consequences, weighing advantages and disadvantages of a course of action, developing a strategic plan of action, assessing risks, being flexible, continually seeking out new opportunities, watching for potential threats, responding to setbacks, and having not one, but several, contingency plans (Graber, 2009). Graber also acknowledges Chess’ ability to teach players to keep one’s ego in check, hold complacency and over-confidence at bay, and persevere in the face of adversity (p. 83). Hunt & Cangemi (2014) conclude that to build leaders capable of handling future demands, the well-researched tool of Chess should be incorporated into early grade curricula and graduate leadership, business, industrial, and educational programs (p. 360). Finally, Graber (2009) advises considering “not only the strategy within each game, but a strategy of repeated games,”

which would include factors making an opponent want to continue play, such as sportsmanship, ethical behavior, encouraging one's opponent, and offering constructive suggestions (p. 79).

Students of all ages gravitate toward puzzles (Joseph, 2006, p. 7). Solving puzzles, broadly defined, helps students “visualize and understand concepts, learn vocabulary, and build problem-solving skills” (p. 7). With creativity, primarily resident in the right brain, beginning to emerge as a key criteria for success and competence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bodell (2014) espouses its role as an important quality for successful leadership. “The business world is shifting from exclusively valuing left-brain skills like subject expertise and technical competency, to seeking individuals with right-brain skills like adaptability and imagination (p. 35). Bodell suggests that this shift includes placing greater value on skills that “empower organizations to challenge the status quo and look into the future” over “analytical and functional left-brain aptitudes” (p. 36). Bodell outlines what she believes to be the five most critical skills of the Conceptual Age: Strategic imagination, provocative inquiry, creative problem-solving, agility, and resilience. Available in a pamphlet rack in the Learning Commons, campus-specific word searches proved unexpectedly popular. Mazes, crosswords, coloring pages, and colored pencils are also available. Like puzzles and games, word finds, crosswords, and coloring allow users to change tasks briefly, clear the mind, and take a mental break to refresh and refocus before returning to one's study efforts. Providing a variety of puzzles and activities to engage the right brain can not only provide an enjoyable mental respite for library users, but also help strengthen and balance students' use of both hemispheres of the brain.

In early 2014, the LSP Program began to work with the UCSD Videogame Development Club to consider building a gaming cabinet for use in the Learning Commons to allow for testing and playing games designed within the campus community, as well as general stress relief. Program staff is composing a proposal to seek needed funding and will revisit the initiative when student club members return to campus in the fall of 2014. Working with an existing student group also builds a deeper, more

personal connection between the library and campus gaming committee and would offer group members valuable hands-on experience.

While some question the appropriateness of videogames in the library, others recognize their value for campuses offering game development programs and those without such disciplines. Life skills videogaming can teach include problem-solving, decision-making, constructing new knowledge or reinforcing existing knowledge, cooperation and teamwork, using competitive strategies, and exhibiting positive affective behaviors (Farber, 2011, p. 23). Videogaming can provide an engaging and immersive experience that spurs high productivity. Yoshida et al. (2008) explains the essential place that motivation holds among psychological concepts associated with education. Many researchers have a relationship between motivation and a variety of educational outcomes such as curiosity, persistence, learning and performance (p. 1401). "Game dynamics are powerful motivators for human action," often encouraging "individuals to exert a significant level of diligence, creativity, and resourcefulness" (Kim, July 9, 2012). "People are more motivated, engaged, and often achieve more in games than in the real world," Kim (2012) suggests, "because games offer an environment intentionally designed to provide people with optimal experience by means of various gaming mechanisms and dynamics" (p. 465).

## **Stress Relief Activities**

A wide range of academic libraries are developing therapeutic and fun services and amenities to help reduce stress among students they serve, both during final exams and throughout the term. A record 30% of students who entered college in Fall 1999 reported frequently feeling "overwhelmed by all I have to do," up from just 16% in 1985 (Reisberg, 2000, p. A49). Additionally, women (39%) were nearly twice as likely as men (20%) to report feeling that way (p. A49). With the cost and pressures of higher education increasing significantly since then, the stress college students experience has continued to rise.

Examples abound of novel and commonplace stress relief activities in academic libraries, including offering sandbags and boxing gloves, postcards students can send to their parents, photo booths and “Stress Confessionals,” bubble wrap clippings, “motivational dartboards” (Datig & Herkner, 2014, p. 130), and more. With the intention of building community in the Learning Commons and providing a relaxing space for self-directed time out from studying, the Learning Spaces Program offers a four-day Stress-Free Zone during the pressure-filled final weeks of each academic term. Currently held in a room off the Commons, the Zone offers board games, puzzles, Legos, arts and crafts, hula hoops, and more. The room is unattended and open continuously (24/7) during the four-day event, with users welcome to stop by for any amount of time. Each evening, the program provides an alternating assortment of snacks for students. During two of the three 2013-2014 Stress-Free Zones, the program also successfully solicited donations of free coffee from a campus vendor. Coffee and healthy snacks like fresh fruit and dried fruit/nut packages proved most popular. Using its existing puzzles/games, LSP budgets \$300 per term for snacks. The event requires advance staff planning, purchasing, and publicizing, but Peer Consultants monitor the event, including food/coffee set-up and maintaining the room. Tallying the number of snacks and coffee distributed provides a limited measure of attendance. Coffee provided typically lasts several hours, but snacks often gone within 15 minutes. The events were well-received and grew in popularity over the course of the year. Based on coffee and snacks consumed, attendance at the event was estimated at 500-700 participants per term. For 2014-2015, program staff purchased people counters to more accurately assess participation in the space. While observing the space during the Spring 2014 event, the author overheard an anonymous pair of library users just discovering the space exclaim, “A Stress-Free Zone?! How cool! No more studying for me. I’ll be camped out in here the rest of the week.” The program intends to continue and perhaps expand the Stress-Free Zone in future years.

In June 2014, the Learning Spaces Program set up a viewing station for a rotating loop of TEDxUCSD Talks selected from YouTube. Produced by UCSD, no fees or permissions were required to

accommodate the showings. LSP staff designated an existing workstation to show the programming. The workstation was initially placed in the Stress-Free Zone at the end of the Spring 2014 term, but has remained in place since then. Bodell (2014) recommends viewing TED Talks and other “resources that fuel future thinking” (p. 36) in her discussion of strategic imagination as a critical skill of the emerging Conceptual Age, which can help viewers imagine growth opportunities and become visionary thinkers themselves. The TEDx programming is intended to support the campus’ academic interests, provoke independent thought and collective conversation, and promote a sense of community in the library. In addition to showcasing and building enthusiasm for UCSD research and scholarship, the station will help program staff gauge whether users will view the programming and/or appreciate the white noise, or will actively avoid the area because of the audible sound. Additional user feedback will be gathered and assessed in 2014-2015 to determine whether to continue the TEDx viewing.

## **Health-Related Equipment & Amenities**

Responding to increasing user requests for health-related equipment and furnishings, LSP staff began to consider whether such additions could help relieve back pain, fatigue, eye strain, and other ailments associated with long hours some students spend studying in the library. Following a suggestion from a graduate student who frequently studies in the library for long periods, three foam rollers were purchased and placed in the Commons for open use to enable stretching. According to Barnett (n.d.), foam rolling works by returning muscles and soft tissue to their native form. “Exercise, injury, and the rigors of life can cause knots that restrict mobility and performance. By smashing those knots and allowing soft tissue to operate correctly again, foam rolling increases range of motion.” Beardsley (2013), too, summarizes a wealth of research indicating that “preliminary evidence suggests that foam rolling may have a role in improving cardiovascular health.” Reporting on a study detailed in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, Wortman (n.d.) purports that “not only can [foam rolling] help

improve joint range of motion and overall muscle recovery, it does so without sacrificing muscle performance and strength.”

Foam rollers purchased initially in Fall 2013 for less than \$40 were tattle-taped and have been consistently used. They are kept in a tall container in the Commons, though are typically left where last used, then sought out or picked up by the next user. Some users employ them while in the open public area, while others take one to a nearby group study room or quiet corner for greater privacy. An adjacent pamphlet rack provides flyers illustrating stretching and desk yoga moves that can be done with or without foam rollers. All user feedback thus far has been positive. Program staff have also fielded numerous suggestions for five-minute massages and plan to consider working with student health and recreation groups to offer massages, stretching, yoga, or other brief sessions during mid-terms and/or the final two weeks of each term.

A variety of research links physical activity with improved learning and increased student productivity (Darg & others), shows that kinesthetic pedagogical approaches allow students to “engage more fully with the given material and each other” (Mobley & Fisher, 2014, p. 301), and supports the conviction that healthy, active kids perform better in class (Darg, n.d.). In June 2014, library administration and campus risk management officials approved LSP’s proposal to purchase two WalkStations for use in the library’s Learning Commons. WalkStations have been welcomed into workplace settings to counter health risks associated with sedentary behavior, but are increasingly seen in libraries for public use. Along with health benefits, they are shown to increase focus, energy, and productivity. One library with WalkStations heard from library users with ADHD that the equipment helps them maintain focus while studying. The UCSD machines arrived in October 2014 will be added to the online reservation system used for group study rooms to manage their use. Following user requests, the program purchased new stools, writable-topped tables, and adjustable-height tables to accommodate standing while working. The stools are height-adjustable and light-weight for mobility, with rounded

bottoms to enable ‘active sitting.’ By making the sitter work to stay balanced, such seating forces “muscle engagement and increased blood flow, leading to more alertness” (Darg, n.d.). Adjacent small tables with rotating tops allow for groups to work informally using affixed removable paper tablets or writable glass surfaces.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS & RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, LSP initiatives progressed incrementally during its first year. While the program accomplished a great deal in 2013-2014, additional research and evaluation is needed to fully understand and address myriad user needs and preferences. Staff intends to continue to regularly assess its activities, building on them iteratively. Staff will also evaluate feedback gathered thus far to inform future services. For example, for 2014-2015, LSP staff purchased an additional 20 electrical towers following overwhelmingly positive feedback on its initial purchase of them, deployed portable and fixed charging stations for personal devices, and increased laptop docking stations available. LSP will launch a pilot initiative to offer workstations with increased adjacent worksurface and with dual monitors, and will configure a laptop bar with existing furniture. An art hanging system will be installed to showcase student and faculty artwork. A coffee shop will be added to the main library, satisfying long-standing and frequent user requests for such an operation. LSP staff will re-run several activities detailed here in future years, to continue to engage library users and gather additional feedback to inform library offerings and operations. The program will explore implementation of LibSat, Counting Opinions’ continuous customer feedback application. LSP staff will request 2014-2015 funding for new furniture projects, including a living room, technology/media enhancements, and conversion of areas under staircases into unique “micro-environments.” Staff will also advance three large projects from planning to implementation in 2014-2015: Technology Lending Program, Digital Media Lab, and Technology Education Program. LSP will take full advantage of UCSD’s inaugural Library Student Advisory Council

as a forum for consistent dialogue between students and library staff on library policies, spaces, and services. The Learning Spaces Program welcomes user suggestions, but plans to better publicize when user suggestions are implemented to further to show library responsiveness and build goodwill with users. The program currently makes its evaluations available to library staff, but intends to increase what it with library users in future years, perhaps similar to the University of Haifa's online 'You Said - We Did' campaign outlining changes implemented there following user surveys suggesting service modifications (Porat, 2013, p. 65). Each of these planned activities will stimulate additional insight from users for further consideration.

More broadly, LSP staff and the library profession should further explore and measure ways library and learning spaces positively contribute, directly or indirectly, to student learning, academic success, university goals, and campus life. Though librarians and others increasingly use the term 'learning spaces,' Lippincott & Duckett (2013) caution that librarians still lack "a good understanding of exactly whether and how renovated library spaces support broad institutional goals for student learning" (p. 12). As reported by Lippincott & Duckett, Scott Bennett explores how campus spaces distinctively impact and foster learning, drawing on specific learning behaviors identified in the National Survey of Student Engagement (p. 12). They hold Bennett's work as an example of the deeper analysis renovated library spaces and associated services, technologies, and content they offer, needed by the profession (p. 12). While research to understand user preferences is critical to developing truly user-focused library spaces, demonstrating clearer links between library spaces and student learning should surpass gauging user satisfaction to focus on deeper research questions that connect library-generated or supported outcomes to departmental, college, and campus teaching and learning priorities (p. 114).

## **CONCLUSION**

Well-supported in the library literature, user engagement and community-building among library users form two foundations of the UCSD Library's Learning Spaces Program. During its inaugural year, the program began to establish a focus on users and a culture of assessment among its staff, and to build an on-going relationship with library users, as it seeks to create a place where students feel welcomed and supported in their academic life. Program staff will continue to nurture the belief that the library exists for its users, and to educate users that the library can best serve their needs when users themselves share their academic needs with library staff. Over future years, these principles will be woven into the fabric of the Learning Spaces Program, rather than implemented on an ad hoc basis. Each of the program's new or on-going initiatives planned for 2014-2015 will in turn offer opportunities for gathering user input, working with campus stakeholders to assess how and how well the library supports campus goals, and continually engaging with and learning from library users.

The Learning Spaces Program's first year was marked by a 'just do it' mentality of implementing several small-scale, low-cost projects. Its activities demonstrate that even limited, yet consistent or iterative, steps can allow staff to learn about users and their needs and promote library services and openness to suggestions and feedback. Though many initiatives detailed here have not completed the service development life cycle of analyzing, designing, implementing, assessing, and evolving, LSP staff will continually and more fully assess what worked and what did not among its 2013-2014 efforts. While perhaps not appropriate for all academic libraries, the Learning Spaces Program's activities at the UCSD Library may prompt those in other academic libraries to implement similar initiatives that can then be shared in the literature to inspire others across the library profession.

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## KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

**Isle electrical towers (Isle Collaborative Power System):** Small, three-tiered, easily movable metal tables by Electri-Cable Assemblies (ECA) designed to bring additional electrical capabilities to spaces where finding sufficient power is challenging. These flexible, stand-alone power stations can be easily adapted to a wide variety of workspaces and designs. See <http://www.electri-cable.com/download/Isle/support/Isle%20Specification%20Sheet%20&%20Ordering%20Information.pdf>.

**KĒVA Planks:** Small block toys by MindWare of Virginia used by kids and adults for building simple or elaborate wooden structures. See general information at <http://www.kevaplanks.com/> and details of its museum exhibits at <http://www.kevaplanks.com/the-keva-planks-museum-exhibit>.

**My Ideal Library Project:** UCSD Library user feedback initiative through which library users wrote a single word or phrase on a worksheet to complete the sentence “My ideal library...”.

**Peer Consultant:** Student workers employed by the UCSD Library’s Learning Spaces Program to staff its Learning Commons desks and to perform a wide variety of other program tasks.

**Space Drawing Exercise:** UCSD Library user feedback project through which participants used a large, blank floor plan of a designated library area to draw in desired furnishings, technologies, amenities, and other elements they would like to see in the space.

**VIP Study Room Contest:** UCSD Library social media campaign and contest inviting library users to comment on what they love about the UCSD Library. The contest winner won exclusive use of a decorated group study room, stocked with treats and supplies, for a 24-hour period during Finals Week.

**White Box Project:** UCSD Library program through which student library users employed markers to draw images and write text on individual white, gift boxes to reflect their feelings about the library.