



St. Edward's University Learning Commons: Research & Toolkit

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Overview:

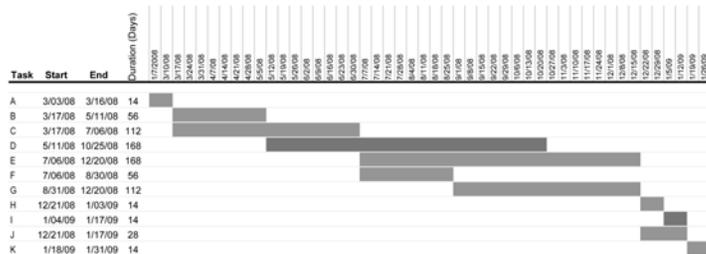
This semester I worked with Kate Silton and Margy Warner at the St. Edward's University library to complete a literature review that explored the state of practice of information and learning commons in academic libraries.

I also prepared a management toolkit that can be used in the event that St. Edward's decides to implement an information or learning commons.

This poster summarizes some of the highlights from my research and toolkit.

Example from toolkit:

Learning Commons Implementation



- A: Create task force.
- B: Task force sets goals, allocates budget, begins designing resources and services to be offered in learning commons.
- C: Task force and architect plan the spatial redesign.
- D: Create learning commons training and policy documentation.
- E: Spatial redesign begins.
- F: Order and purchase new technology and resources.
- G: IT and library staff receive learning commons training.
- H: Implement new technology and resources.
- I: Testing period for new technology.
- J: IT and library staff receive software and equipment training.
- K: Assessment program begins.

What's the difference between an information commons and a learning commons?

An *information commons* is typically a technological initiative in the library space. It may include computers, media-ready classrooms, an IT support desk, and laptops for student check-out. An information commons points to a collaboration between the library and IT staff. The students can do their research and begin working on projects in the same space.



A *learning commons* takes this idea of students researching and writing in the library a few steps further. Learning commons are spaces in the library or as their own buildings that provide research assistance from librarians, technical assistance from IT staff, and an array of other services that support student learning. In many cases, the writing center has a presence in the learning commons.



Acknowledgements:

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Examples of best practices for learning commons:

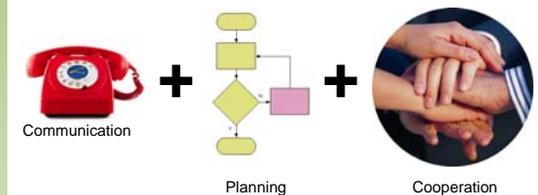
Planning

- Achieve support from university administrators
- Create a task force representing all the stakeholder groups
- Create a set of goals and objectives that will drive the progress of the learning commons

Policy

- To be effective, the learning commons policy should encourage buy-in and cooperation from many departments, when done correctly this should lead to better customer service
- Keep the learning commons policies up to date and available to all library and non-library staff

Conclusions:



= A Successful Learning Commons