Introduction & Scope

This is a working document, subject to change depending on the decision of the University Centre Board. It is a summary of relevant information from previous reviews and the Winter 2016 Board Retreat. We found that common themes have been expressed by previous boards. We hope to use this document as a reference point for board members to reflect upon throughout the year and in the future.

The scope of this report extends through all 6 levels of the University Centre (UC) recognizing the critical need to address areas that primarily meet student’s needs.

This report identifies an overall strategy for evaluating space use, through the establishment of first principles. It is noted that potential change in one area of the building has implications for other spaces, and as such, a strategic and holistic approach is necessary to ensure optimal results that satisfy the established priorities and needs.

Background

The University Centre, opened in 1974, was originally intended to be a building for students, by students; providing lounges, theatres, meeting areas, and student organizational and club space. Students voted in favour of including University-run student services, when provincial funding was promised to accompany this expansion of the building’s purpose. At that time enrolment was approximately 12,000 students, 40% of whom lived on campus. While the circumstances under which the UC ended up being constructed and governed are tumultuous, students maintain a majority on the UC Board, reflective of the origins of the building. The University Centre was seen as the central meeting space and provided essential services for faculty, staff, students and community members. Many changes have occurred over the years, impacting usage of the Centre:

- Enrolment has grown to ~22,000 with a corresponding increase in faculty and staff.
- Residences are primarily for entering students with returning students moving off-campus.
- With the development of a robust transit system, more students are commuting from Toronto and surrounding areas.
- New buildings in other areas of campus have included social and meeting space. In particular, there is now significant social space in the Summerlee Science Complex, Thornbrough Building, and Macdonald Hall. Students are now clustering in a number of different academic buildings.
- The Library continues to evolve, adding more individual and group study space, with areas for food and beverages.
· Student needs are changing, requiring more demand for group work space that includes access to technology
· The development of the downtown entertainment centre as well as a late night bus pass has expanded the social interaction space to off-campus venues. The University is no longer seen as the late night destination choice.

**Historical Roles of the University Centre?**

A number of definitions and concepts have been written since the UC was built in the 1970s. These roles have been historical, non-permanent, and ever changing and evolving with the university community.

These include:

- The “welcome centre” of the campus; serving often as the first building that individuals are introduced to when receiving a tour; it is a multi-use, centralized, community centre that serves all members of the University family – students, workers, faculty, administration, alumni and guests
- The “main street” of the campus; highly frequented, providing services and amenities to the University community, including those that might not normally be found on campus.
- The “square” of the campus; an organizing location and host to many events and actions, for community members to come together to share and discuss issues, ideas, and knowledge
- The “hub” of the campus; serving as a key space for associations/organizations/unions that is easily locatable and accessed by their members, with close proximity to collaborating groups, and regularly utilized services
- The “living room” of the campus; a home-away-from-home, providing meeting, event, study, and socialization space for connecting and building communities

**First Principles**

During this review, a number of principles were established to guide discussion and decision making when conducting space analyses. These principles were generated through a review of previous documents, the Winter 2016 UC Board retreat, and discussions with users. These principles are not listed in any specific order of priority, however when making decisions, they should be considered concurrently with the acknowledgment that certain spaces may be more suited to meeting specific needs.

- Improve and expand **student organizational space**, while developing appropriate space for current users (which includes: special status groups, student associations and their associated clubs, groups with student membership, etc.)
- Provide more open and closed **meeting space** that is easily bookable, modern, and available to all users of the building
- Provide **multi-purpose space** suited to all students
- Provide space to support the diverse needs of **commuter students**
Continue to provide **revenue generating** opportunities for the building through avenues which align with the established principles and the current student environment

Actively seek **user feedback** and direction in proposed renovations for, and the development of, the UC

Prioritize accessibility, equity, and inclusivity; striving towards **anti-oppressive operations and space**

Improve and expand **student service** space, defined as intentionally delivered non-academic resources and support services aimed at facilitating student learning, growth and development

**First Principles in Practice (working, not limited to)**

- **Student organizational space:**
  - Storage space for groups who are unable to have an office
  - Space for groups to meet and collaborate together such as a clubs commons or a clubs social lounge.
  - Prioritize consulting with and respecting SSG space needs as well as other student groups seeking equity
  - Student run media

- **Meeting space:**
  - Rooms suitable for a variety of group sizes
  - Transparent and accessible booking system for students
  - Meeting space set aside for student organizations
  - Pre-equipped modern rooms
    - Built in projectors and screens
    - Tables and chairs available in rooms
    - Improve on deferred maintenance
  - Easily bookable space for rooms, accessible to all campus users, including individual students:
    - Online (ex. website) and in-person (ex. info desk) hub
    - Shows which rooms are currently in use
    - Providing a weekly schedule of room use
    - Shows meeting room accessibility features (doors, flooring, equipment in room, gender neutral washroom and elevator proximity)

- **Multi-purpose space:**
  - Space for students to meet for social, academic or other purposes.
  - Computerized screens highlighting upcoming events

- **Commuter students:**
  - Secure lockers for short term storage
  - Increased lounge/waiting space to remove congestion inside the South entrance
  - Develop space for commuter students to meet and greet

- **Revenue Generating**
  - As per ancillary agreement
  - Leases for student oriented services
- Events and conferences
- Space rentals for external parties
- Approved/responsible advertising space
- Solicit the University or other funding sources for future development
- Business operations (Brass Taps)

**User feedback:**
- Mechanisms for students and other users to give feedback (ie website, doing days for feedback on the 1st floor, an email they can send their feedback to).
- Improve student feedback on current programming, review feedback continuously and respond accordingly
- Modern wayfinding tool
  - Map of the building
  - Upcoming events/programming
  - Feedback tool
  - Accessibility features (ramps, elevators, gender neutral washrooms, accessibility services, food options, public water fountains/reusable water refill stations, etc.)

**Anti-oppressive space:**
- Integrated throughout principles above (ex. wayfinding tool, improved signage, accessibility features in all spaces - meeting rooms, orgs, etc.)
- Prioritization of space for equity seeking groups and organizations with membership who are part of marginalized groups
- Improve washrooms including increasing the number of universal washrooms

**Student Services:**
- Improving and expanding current space
- Increase visibility

## Space Analysis

Preamble: Each level was broken into three aspects: (1) Existing Character, (2) Principles Currently Met (examples given where possible), (3) Space Issues.

### Level 0

Existing Character

Level 0 is currently split into two main uses: service/loading areas, and publicly accessible areas. The service and loading areas consist of hospitality services (main kitchen), storage, shipping and receiving and a mail room. The publicly accessible areas include Peter Clark Hall (PCH), two meeting rooms, the Off-Campus University Student (OCUS) Lounge, and renovated washrooms. PCH is the largest on-campus licensed venue, with a capacity of ~600 (standing room 1000, theater style 700, dinner 500). The hall hosts a wide range of events each year for
students, faculty, staff, and external and internal conferences. There is a transit drivers lounge on the north east side.

Principles Currently Met
- Student organizational space (OCUS)
- Meeting space (bookable: 2 smaller rooms, PCH)
- Social space (OCUS lounge, PCH)
- Commuter students (OCUS)
- Revenue generating (PCH)
- Anti-oppressive (easy elevator access, Wudu Stations)

Space Issues
- The University Centre’s Level 0 contains a large amount of real estate that sits empty for the majority of the time (with exception of the OCUS Lounge), often too large to support day to day use.
- The basement space is often hard to find, as the stair access is not clearly visible at either of the entrances, and it is not frequently trafficked.
- While some renovations were made recently to PCH, it still has a dated feel and is limited by its basement features (e.g. lack of windows)
- Noise carries (Hospitality trolleys are loud against the tile floor)
- Meeting space dated, lacking relevant technologies and power outlets.

Level 1

Existing Character:
The ground floor is the hub of the University Centre, a place for the campus community to meet socially. The Courtyard accommodates a wide range of changing displays and popular events. Food Court/Centre 6 and The Daily Grind provide food and social space. Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity (GRCGED), a SSG, is located by the existing washrooms, and offers a diverse range of essential support, representation, and services to the university community, particularly marginalized groups on campus. Meeting room 103 is frequently booked for events, with a size that can accommodate medium to larger groups of up to 100 people, has windows, is free to book, and is fairly easy to locate and conveniently centrally located for student organizations, and external users. The grey steps in the UC courtyard are also very popular, filling the need for waiting and courtyard seating. Open table area, where previously a retail tenant was housed, is regularly utilized by students as study space. Retail tenants compose the remainder of the space. The info desk and off campus living are also located on the floor.

Principles currently met:
- Student organizational space (GRCGED)
- Meeting space (UC 103)
- Social space (food court/Centre 6/Daily Grind, stairs)
- Commuter students (Daily grind lounge, Off Campus Living, Information Desk)
- Anti-oppressive (SSG Space, possibly accessible?)
- Revenue generating (leases)
- Student Services (Student Life Units, Student Benefits Office, UC Admin [Some Functions], Hospitality [Some Functions])

**Space Issues**

- The Food Court/Centre 6 is very well used, but congested at peak periods, and lacks accessibility (particularly for those with wheelchairs or mobility devices). The renovation to change the lights in this space has resulted in greater usage at night.
- The Daily Grind is an inviting and popular lounge area for students, but it also is congested at peak times.
- The existing washrooms on this level are remote from Centre 6 and often inadequate for the number of users, especially female, at peak times. This floor also lacks a universal washroom.
- Commuters often crowd the entrance during peak bus times. Little seating is available to commuters.
- Ineffective use of wall space in the study area next to the benefits office.

**Level 2 Existing Space**

**Existing Character**

This is the floor primarily for student organizations, housing the CSA offices and clubs (not under UC Board jurisdiction), a SSG: Guelph Queer Equality (GQE), CFRU community radio station, CUPE 3913, and the Ontarian and Peak newspapers. The UC Administration and Brass Taps occupy the rest of this space. There is a women's and men's washroom, as well as a universal washroom. (What space we own as the board: space highlighted)

**Principles on Level 2**

- Student organizational space (Clubs and CSA, GQE, Ontarion, The Peak, CFRU)
- Meeting space (CSA Boardroom)
- Social space (Clubs, club hallway lounge spaces)
- Commuter students (Airport lounge and clubs)
- Anti-oppressive (SSG space, universal washroom)
- Revenue generating (Brass Taps)
- User Feedback (UC Administration Office)
- Student Services (CUPE 3913 [Some Functions], UC Admin [Some Functions])

**Space Issues**

- The CSA/Student Club areas on Level 2 are clearly congested lacking adequate space to accommodate their members and equipment. The CSA has only one meeting room, and many over-shared offices or unsuitable work spaces. This organization has an urgent need for more meeting rooms, offices and work space.
● The Airport Lounge renovations have resulted in increased usage
● CSA general membership should be able access space and use it for group meetings or study/social purposes (accessible space dedicated for students)
● There is no dedicated meeting space for use by the CSA general membership
● The student clubs are also squeezed. 29 clubs currently share 15 rooms, while approximately 30 clubs are currently on waiting lists for offices. The clubs have an urgent need for shared meeting space. The existing club rooms are crammed with desks, seating and supplies, leaving no room for groups to meet. This creates Health and Safety concerns.
● Clubs have also expressed a major need for storage which the current space does not allow for.

Level 3 Existing Space

Existing character
Level 3 is university student services zone that accommodates a wide range of services. CUPE 1334 offices are on this floor. The north side meeting rooms are well-used, often booked out by organizations/departments.

Principles on Level 3
● Social Space (Lounge next to registrar counter)
● Meeting space (Four meeting rooms in North Wing)
● Anti-oppressive (SAS and Counselling Services - scheduled to move to new AC, OIA, OUTline)
● Revenue generating (Meeting room cancellations and non-use)
● Anti-Oppressive (Universal Washroom)
● Student Services (Student Life Units, Office of Registrarial Services, Office of Graduate Studies, UAIC, Centre for International Programs, Student Wellness Units)

Space issues
● Meeting space dated, lacking relevant technologies and power outlets.
● All student support services on this floor require some expansion space.
● In the past decade several social student spaces (Boo Bar, etc.) have been re-leased into administrative services.
● The lounge next to the UAIC counter area is large and is not regularly frequented beyond peak times throughout semesters
● Some reception areas are somewhat confusing for first time visitors and could be more clearly defined for their target users.
● Universal washroom locks at 1630

Level 4

Existing character
Level 4 is predominantly a University Administration floor. The north side meeting rooms are well-used, often booked out by organizations/departments.

Principles on Level 4
- Meeting space (Five meeting rooms in north wing)
- Revenue generation (Leases)
- Student Services (Office of Research [Some Functions])

Space issues
- Meeting space dated, lacking relevant technologies, power outlets and flexibility.

Level 5

Existing character
Level 5 has the character of two remote and quiet floor areas perched at the top of the UC beyond view of the central Courtyard and beyond reach of the open, central stair. The faculty lounge takes up a large area in the North wing. The Graduate Student Lounge, GSA offices, multi-faith chapel, College Royal, and the Mature Student Association are all located in the north wing. International Student Organization (ISO), a SSG, is also located in the north wing, and offers a diverse range of essential support, representation, and services to the university community, particularly marginalized groups on campus. South wing is HR and Financial Services.

Principles on Level 5
- Student organizational space (GSA, College Royal, Mature Student Association, ISO)
- Meeting space (GSA Boardroom)
- Social space (Graduate Student Lounge, Mature Student Association and ISO)
- Commuter students (Graduate Student Lounge)
- Anti-oppressive (Multi-faith chapel, SSG space)
- Revenue generating (Leases)
- Student Services (Human Resources [Some Functions])

Space issues
- Most student groups located on this floor are separated from ones which are located on level 2

Principles Met by the UC

The UC as a building meets all of the principles in varying degrees, however, this is not to say that it excels in addressing them. Meeting space is the only principle addressed on all floors, but the majority of space is neither easily bookable nor modern. Social, student organizational and commuter student space is delegated to specific floors of the UC, and has been noted as inadequate. Revenue generation is conducted throughout the majority of the building, typically through leases. Lastly student feedback and anti-oppressive initiatives have been rarely met.
Furthermore, the board needs to seek broader input on the spaces issues identified in this report given that they were developed through previous reports, retreat notes and M&O working group discussions. The board will also have to provide an avenue for users to identify additional space issues that may have arisen following the release of previous reports.

References


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