

Student Success Center Classroom Component Summary of Campus Feedback

As part of the planning process for the proposed Student Success Center, Capital Asset Strategies and the Office of the Provost conducted a workshop on April 20, 2017 where 136 faculty, staff, and students came together to provide feedback on both the classroom component of the building program and the building location. Following two brief [presentations](#), moderated small group conversations facilitated feedback on key questions related to the future of instructional space at UCR. Feedback from this session also guided the creation of a subsequent campus-wide survey, distributed via e-mail and available online from April 26 to May 2, which elicited 154 responses. This brief summarizes the feedback received from both the workshop and the survey.

Classroom Sizes

Preliminary estimates are that the Student Success Center could accommodate at most 1100 classroom seats. Workshop participants were asked to allocate these seats among four classroom size ranges. Based on feedback received from these participants, survey respondents were asked to allocate the same number of seats among five size ranges. The table below shows the average number of seats allocated to each size range by both workshop participants and survey respondents.

April 20 Workshop		Campus-wide Survey	
Classroom Type/Size	# of Seats	# of Seats	Classroom Type/Size
Large lecture Hall (>300)	415	275	Large lecture hall (>300)
Large classroom (75-200)	351	258	Small lecture hall (150-300)
		218	Large classroom (75-150)
Medium classroom (30-75)	173	198	Medium classroom (30-75)
Small classroom (<30)	161	151	Small classroom (<30)

While there was wide variation in individual responses, some consensus emerged around the need for larger classrooms and lecture halls, with fewer seats being allocated to smaller classrooms. This result is consistent with concerns expressed by some participants about the anticipated loss of large lecture hall space in University Village when the current lease expires in 2021, and with the anticipated construction of smaller classroom space as part of the North District development.

Classroom Attributes

Flexibility and Collaboration

Most respondents were excited about the potential offered by new flexible approaches to classroom seating with ample student workspace. There is a strong belief that it should be easy to rearrange rooms for multiple instructional approaches that facilitate the use of active learning in which students work together in teams. This feedback persisted across classroom sizes and layouts. For example, the 80-person, collaborative classroom shown here elicited feedback such as,



“Useful space for active learning and for traditional lecture. The flexible furniture in this room size allows for diverse teaching styles.”

Technology

Respondents frequently cited the need for a suite of modern classroom technologies that do not interfere with one another. For example, projector screens should not obstruct the majority of whiteboard space. Additionally, instruction often requires the projection of two images, rather than just one. Respondents felt this should be possible with good lines-of-sight for everyone in the classroom. Reliable wifi and remote access options also were considered highly desirable.

Accessibility

Respondents also expressed desires for improved classroom accessibility that go beyond ensuring functionality for differently-abled learners. More aisle space that allows faculty to circulate through the room and facilitates small-group work, as well as ample entry and exit space to allow for easier movement during passing time were commonly expressed preferences. Similarly, right vs left-handedness should not be a challenge because of poor seat design or availability. Adequate surface space is important to all learners, and accessible seating should not be at a premium because it is also the only space with a large surface area.

Maintenance and Reliability

Many respondents expressed concerns about the time costs to reconfiguring a classroom and the maintenance costs of furniture that allows for dynamic instruction. Working furniture is more important than flexible furniture, and classroom designs should be maintainable at reasonable cost. Additionally, concerns were raised that difficulties could arise if faculty plan for teaching in a dynamic classroom, but are not assigned to such a room.

Environmental Issues

Noise

Several comments focused on potential noise issues both between classrooms and with nearby public spaces. For instance, one group of respondents felt that social space with high traffic and volume should be separate from classroom space. Similarly, classroom space which drives large amounts of foot traffic should be separate from space that needs a more stable or peaceful setting. There are also concerns about students not having space to wait before class begins, apart from waiting in the hallway outside the classroom. This regularly causes a significant disturbance to classes and makes entry and exit more difficult during passing time.

Collaborative Spaces

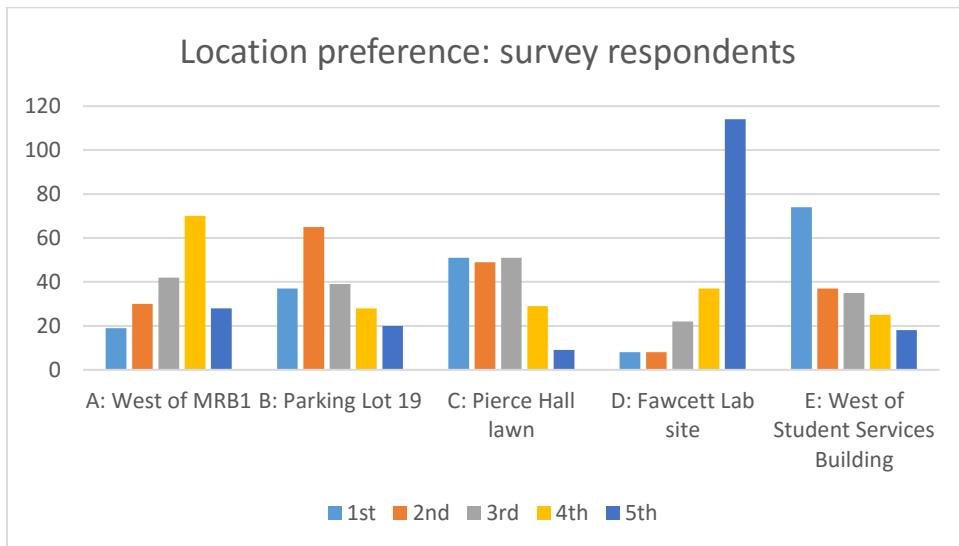
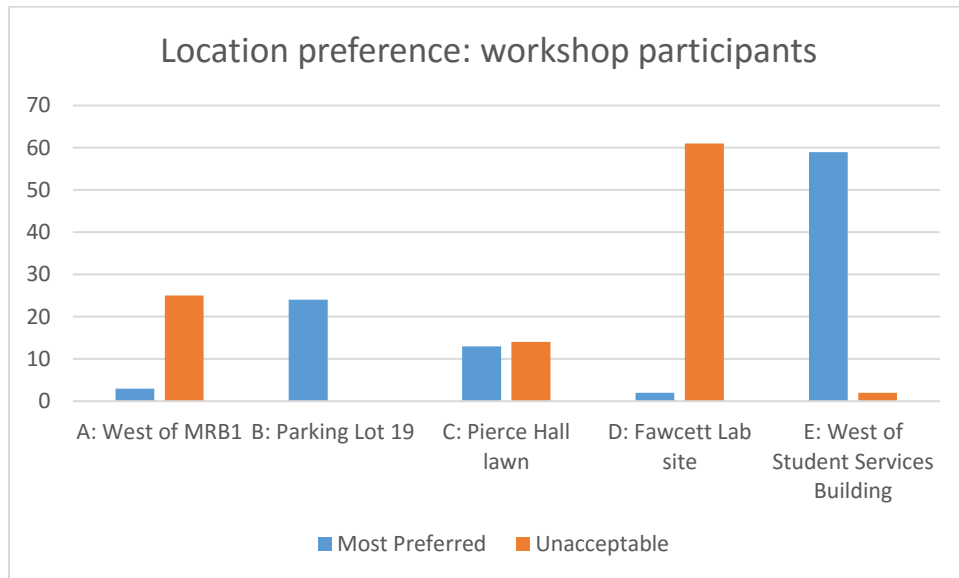
One way of helping alleviate noise issues would be to provide other open spaces for students nearby. As one respondent wrote, such space can serve as “collaborative space for students to interact ... with white boards, tables, and such.” The need for such space was a recurring theme, and the benefits to both students and faculty were noted.

Shared Space

Most respondents seemed supportive of allowing “student organizations and study groups [to] use classroom space off-hours.” People liked the idea that “student meeting places should be integrated,” while still allowing for the complexities of noise and traffic flow.

Location

Workshop participants were asked to select their most preferred of five proposed building locations, and to note any locations they felt were unacceptable. Survey respondents were asked to rank-order all five proposed locations. The results for each exercise are shown in the charts below.



Three locations appear to have strong to moderate support: Parking Lot 19, Pierce Hall Lawn, and West of Student Services Building. Each of these has roughly equivalent numbers of first and second choice votes among survey respondents. However Pierce Hall Lawn looks less desirable among workshop participants. The Fawcett Lab site appears to be the least desirable location, having received large numbers of “unacceptable” and “5th-place” votes.